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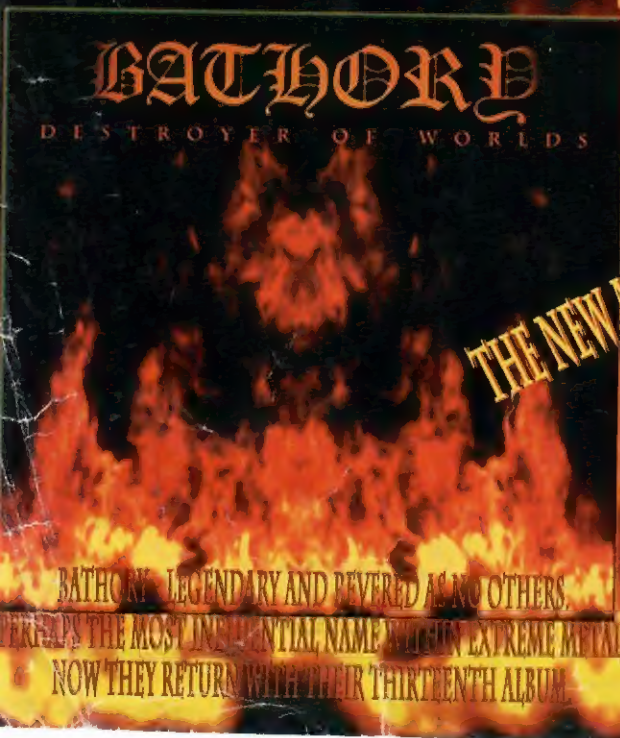
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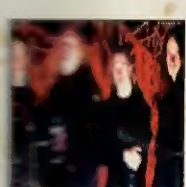
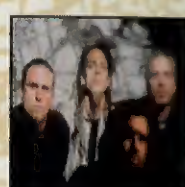
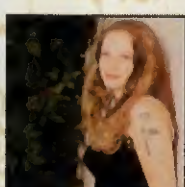
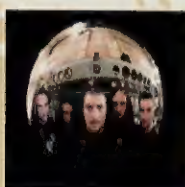


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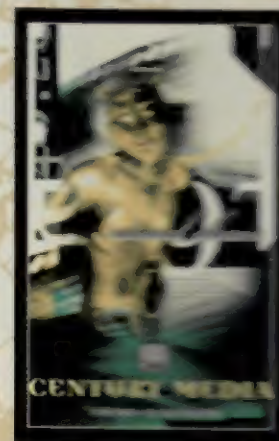


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Superstar Special January 2002 Vol. 19, No. 1



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Flotsam And Jetsam
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decided not to tour
with Flotsam but will
record with the band
for new releases.
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RANT



Mike G with Puya drummer Ed Paniagua. Watch for a Puya feature next issue.



Liz Ciavarella with Krisiun's Max Kolesne at last year's Full Force Festival in Germany.



Maniacs writer AnneMarie Bowman with Dark Funeral members Emperor Magus Caligula and Lord Ahriman. Check out her studio report on page 34.

Metal Maniacs Lives! Tomas Pascual, Mike G and Liz Ciavarella at Wetlands, NYC for the Krisiun/Immolation gala.



James LaBrie

NO LONGER MULLMUZZLED

by Vincent Cicolini

Although the multi-faceted genre of heavy metal has its share of great voices, vocals are often as important to an extreme music band's sound as male sex organs are to heterosexual porn movies: they are present merely out of necessity. This is what makes James LaBrie unique. The Dream Theater vocalist is more than gifted; his voice is as integral to the progressive metal heroes' sound as Mike Portnoy's drums, Jordan Rudess' keyboards, John Myung's bass, or John Petrucci's guitar.

Besides subjecting himself to a seemingly endless battery of interviews for both *James LaBrie's Mullmuzzler 2*, his second solo effort and *Leonardo, The Absolute Man*, the ambitious rock opera in which he assumed the title role, the vocalist is preparing lyrics for the next Dream Theater record, due in early 2002.

"It might not seem as if I've had much of a break but Dream Theater finished its last world tour on October, 21, 2000 in London, England," he says. "By the time [the band] steps out on stage again, a year will have passed."

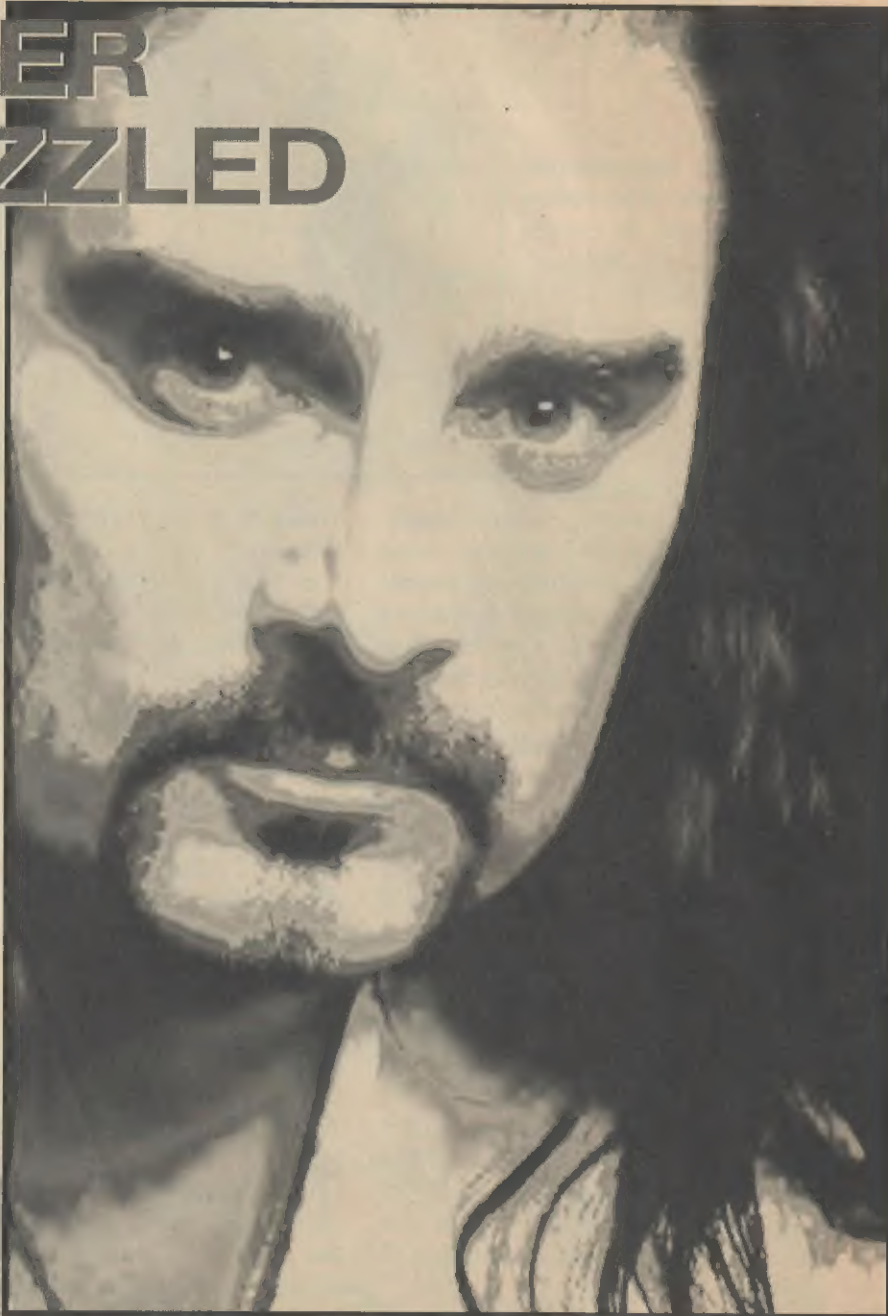
Once regarded as an outcast, Dream Theater has not only achieved breakthrough success but is credited with rejuvenating progressive rock, opening doors for a new wave of bands and independent record companies. "Fortunately, we're considered a part of today's generation [of bands]," laughs LaBrie. "For years, progressive rock survived underground. We've been lucky to be successful and earn a living from it."

The vocalist is still flattered, however, when musicians, especially would-be peers, tell him how much his band has helped them. "They say that because of Dream Theater's success, record labels are now open to them and taking the time to listen to their demos," he continues.

Although the band hopes to build upon the momentum of its now-classic 1991 release *Metropolis Part 2: Scenes From A Memory* and the triumphant 2000 world tour that followed, its members agreed that they needed a brief hiatus.

As in the past, Dream Theater's members used the short break to work on a variety of side and solo projects. Besides overseeing the creation of Dream Theater's ambitious three-disk *Live Scenes From New York*, the companion piece to the band's recently released DVD, *Metropolis 2000*:

Scenes From New York, Portnoy recorded with his side project, *Transatlantic*, and joined Dream Theater guitarist John Petrucci on this year's G3 tour; Myung recorded with Jelly Jam, a side project that also features King's X guitarist Ty Tabor and Dixie Dreg's drummer Rod Morgenstein; and Jordan Rudess readied his



solo debut, *Feeding The Wheel*. LaBrie, however, started working on his second solo effort while still on the road, mailing tapes filled with song ideas to such collaborators such as Matt Guillory, Trent Gardner, Gary Wehrkamp and Carl Cadden-James.

"I approached [the creation of *James LaBrie's Mullmuzzler 2*] the same way I did my [solo debut, 1999's *Mullmuzzler: Keep It To Yourself*]," he explains. "When we finally got together to finish the songs, things came together quickly."

"Besides writing four songs with Guillory, I wrote the opening track, 'After Life' with Gardner and 'Venice Burning' and 'Confronting The

more

James LaBrie

continued

Devil" with Wehrkamp and Cadden-James. After working on arrangements and melodies via FedEx, I joined [Wehrkamp and Cadden-James] in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania where we finished the songs."

For his second solo effort, LaBrie reenlisted the musicians he worked with on his solo debut: drummer Mike Manginni, guitarists Mike Borkowsky and Mike Keneally, keyboardist Matt Guillory and bassist Bryan Beller. The resulting *James LaBrie's Mullmuzzler 2* is not only superior to his critically acclaimed solo debut, but is one of the best records of 2001. Mixing a variety of hard rock and metal flavors, the album has something for everyone.

"People interested in listening to this record will wonder what my take on music is at this point in my life," he explains. "I want to show people how I've evolved as a vocalist; let people know that the power is still here. I also wanted to show a side of me that was full of soul, passion and expression."

LaBrie was forced by Dream Theater's record company, Elektra, to release his solo debut, *Keep It To Yourself*, under the pseudonym Mullmuzzler. Although the label allowed him to use his name and a couple of photos inside the CD's booklet, it refused to let him put his name on the cover of a record released by another company [Magna Carta]. When the vocalist approached Elektra about his second solo effort, however, the label was more open to his demands.

"The label was apprehensive when I recorded [my first solo] record," he says. "This time, I spoke with [Dream Theater's A&R representative] and said, 'Dream Theater has sold more than four million records for your label. How is [my releasing a solo album on a tiny independent] threatening to the band's existence on Elektra? If anything, it will add more spice.' He e-mailed me back and said, 'Send me a brief synopsis of what you are doing.' I replied, 'I just want to record a record.' He contacted the business department, who sent me a release form



allowing me to use my name on the front cover of the record."

In an attempt to prevent confusion, the vocalist titled his second solo effort *James LaBrie's Mullmuzzler 2*. "I'm proud of the first record," he says. "It would have been nice to get more life out of those songs. I hope to do more with the new record."

The feedback the vocalist received from the record's distributors and the various labels that handled his first record in territories around the world was that *Mullmuzzler: Keep It To Yourself* could have sold twice as much as it did. It was difficult, however, educating the record-buying public who Mullmuzzler was.

James LaBrie's Mullmuzzler 2 is actually harder, heavier and more progressive than its predecessor, which is surprising because during interviews for *Mullmuzzler: Keep It To Yourself*, LaBrie confessed a desire to record a pop album.

"There is a pop side to me," he admits. "I listen to vocalists that I like, even if I don't like their style of music. George Michaels is pop, but he has an incredible voice. I listen to his music for inspiration. [The late Queen frontman] Freddie Mercury is one my favorite vocalists. He had incredible range, power, and soul."

"At one point, I was thinking of taking a Sting approach on *James LaBrie's Mullmuzzler 2*, creating accessible music with taste and style. That opportunity, however, has yet to present itself. I did touch upon some of those elements, however, on such songs such as 'I Believe.'"

"Slow Burn," *Mullmuzzler: Keep It To Yourself's* Led Zeppelin-ish power ballad, could have been a hit had it been properly promoted

to commercial rock radio. "It is tough getting your music played on radio," huffs LaBrie. "Radio is a limited outlet and will only get you so far. Radio dictates the belief that [what is aired] is the only music out there and it all sounds the same. There is no education factor out there [to let people know what music is currently available]."

The Toronto, Canada native is also an outspoken opponent of his country's broadcast content regulations. Established in 1958 to stimulate Canada's cultural production by ensuring greater exposure for Canadian artists in Canada's marketplaces, Canadian content rules (CanCon) is a system of quotas to regulate the amount of Canadian program content in the American-dominated television and radio

broadcasting systems. To qualify as Canadian content, music must meet at least two of four set conditions: (1) The music must be composed entirely by a Canadian; (2) The music and/or the lyrics must be performed principally by a Canadian; (3) The musical selection consists of a live performance that is recorded wholly in Canada, or performed wholly in Canada and broadcast live in Canada; and (4) The lyrics are written entirely by a Canadian. More than one-third of each hour of a Canadian AM or FM radio broadcast must have Canadian content.

"The one thing in this world that doesn't need borders is music," contends LaBrie. "CanCon [for music] was conceived by a Canadian rock band who went to the U.K. in the early 1960s and saw that the Beatles had started something similar to support British acts. This band returned home and established CanCon to support Canadian recording artists and give them a better chance to earn a living. It sounds good in theory, but here is the big joke: although I'm the producer, vocalist, and chief songwriter for both of my solo records, I cannot get CanCon certification because the collaborators and musicians I work with are American. The same thing has happened to Bryan Adams. CanCon promotes mediocrity. I'm Canadian and CanCon is spitting in my face."

"Then there are musicians who are supported by CanCon that are unable to venture into other territories. Because of the regulation, it's actually more difficult for Canadian artists to become international stars. Doors are slammed in their faces by pissed-off record executives who have been victimized by CanCon. There are a lot of talented artists in Canada. Things

would be different if things were based on the merits of the music."

Although LaBrie has discussed performing select shows in support of his latest effort, he wants to sit back and "see what the vibe is" when the record is released in early September. "If things go well," he says, "I'll approach the promoters who are interested and say, 'Let's do this.' It would be select dates and I'd have to decide which cities to visit, but I'd love to perform [Mullmuzzler material] live. The other players on the record are ready to go; it is just a matter of when it would make sense to do so."

Earlier this year, the operatically trained vocalist jumped at the chance to assume the lead role in the recently released rock opera *Leonardo, The Absolute Man*.

"Leonardo is Trent [Gardner's] baby," says LaBrie. "He wrote it all. When [Magna Carta CEO] Pete [Morticelli, who came up with the

original concept for the rock opera] said that Trent wanted me to sing the role of Leonardo, I said, 'absolutely. I'd love to do [a rock opera].' When I first heard the material, I knew that it would be cool."

Although there has been interest in bringing *Leonardo, The Absolute Man* to a Las Vegas stage, it is LaBrie's dream to perform on Broadway. The vocalist actually sent "feelers" to Broadway agents. They immediately expressed interest.

"Obviously, I would have to work around Dream Theater, when the band takes its next extended break in a couple of years," he says.

"Eventually, I will be on a Broadway stage."

Besides *Leonardo, The Absolute Man*, LaBrie would love to be part of a revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, whose title role was originated by Deep Purple vocalist Ian Gillan. He is interested in doing *Beauty And The Beast*.

"They wouldn't have to provide much of a costume," he laughs. "I'd also like to take a crack at *Phantom Of The Opera*. It would be a thrill to do that. I'll decide what makes the most sense for me when it gets close [to Dream Theater's next break]. In the meantime, *James LaBrie's Mullmuzzler 2* and the next Dream Theater record are my priority."

JAMES LABRIE Select Discography:

Solo releases:

Mullmuzzler: Keep It To Yourself — 1999, Magna Carta
James LaBrie's Mullmuzzler 2 — 2001, Magna Carta

Dream Theater:

Images And Words — 1992, Atlantic
Live At The Marquee — 1993, WEA International
Awake — 1994, Elektra
A Change Of Seasons — 1995, Elektra
Falling Into Infinity — 1997, Elektra
Once In a LIVEtime — 1998, Elektra
Metropolis Part 2: Scenes From A Memory — 1999, Elektra
Metropolis 2000: Scenes From New York — 2001, Elektra

Various Guest Appearances:

Fates Warning, *Parallels* — 1991, Metal Blade
Various Artists, *Working Man: A Tribute To Rush* — 1996, Magna Carta
Various Artists, *Dragon Attack: A Tribute To Queen* — 1997, CNR Music
Explores Club, *Age Of Impact* — 1998, Magna Carta
Shadow Gallery, *Tyranny* — 1998, Magna Carta
Various Artists, *Encores, Legends, and Paradox: Tribute to ELP* — 1999, Magna Carta
Various Artists, *Tie Your Mother Down: Tribute to Queen* — 2000, Cleopatra
Various Artists, *Leonardo: The Absolute Man* — 2001, Magna Carta

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Passing Through Worlds Unknown

by Adrian "The Energizer"
Bromley

Very few bands in this day and age can call themselves unique. Oakland, California's musical nomads Neurosis are one of those bands. To fully understand what I mean, you really need to look at the path of musical diversity (and destruction) the band has provided for over 15 years. Rebellious angst, hardcore tendencies,

sonic masterpieces and brutally honest emotions have found refuge in their musical endeavors. Albums like *Souls At Zero* (1992), *Enemy Of The Sun* (1993) and the brutally-charged *Through Silver In Blood* (1996) served as plateaus of existence for fans to explore in order to understand the underlying meanings of Neurosis. Each release has proven to be a consuming piece of work, but a worthwhile gift to the musical world once it has been completed. No band on this planet can match the intensity and the sincere enlightenment that crystallizes and cools a

Neurosis composition. This is far from paint-by-numbers music.

The band's latest Relapse Records disc, *A Sun That Never Sets*, is by far their most diverse and melodic, finding the band comfortable with both melody and a sedated atmosphere. They've obviously discovered that there are musical characteristics they've never fully explored. This time it's melody. It needed and craved attention. Fans of the band will indeed note the sedated flow at times, but in the end, no matter how soft the passages are, they still roge with Neurosis-intensity.

Evolution and understanding has always been the key, but while Neurosis has always evolved, they have steadfastly stayed true to the ideas of what makes this

neurosis Neurosis. Whether it's the descent into sonic obliteration complete with abrasive and emotionally charged excursions, or their oftentimes cryptic lyrical passageway, Neurosis has always managed to take the music to new levels with each recording. Nothing is predictable with this band. Thank god for that!

Neurosis guitarists/vocalists Steve Von Till and Scott Kelly recently let this reporter in on how the band coordinates their game plan for each record. "We don't really predict the way the music is going," explains Von Till. "It isn't cerebral. It doesn't happen in the brain. We just have a gut-level knowledge of where it is." We're down the block from Relapse headquarters. It's been a solid steady weekend of press. "Basically we have faith in the process," adds Kelly. "We have been so together so long that we don't worry what's going to happen. We just

more

NEUROSIS

continued

know that it is going to evolve."

"The biggest lesson learned over time is how to surrender ourselves to the spirit of the music and the inspiration of Neurosis," Von Till points out. "We experience this inner fire that drives us in what we do and causes us to constantly become more focused on making sure this lifetime is used for inspirational, original and meaningful work."

"We are always totally prepared for the studio before we go in. We don't have the resources that will allow us to experiment in the studio. Since we basically record all of our records live, we are always 100% solid with new material before we go to record."

As most musicians will tell you, recording is a grueling process. The amount of time in the studio, the pressures and constant changes do take its toll. How does Von Till and the band feel after recording each project? Drained? Ticking to do more studio work?

Von Till: "It depends on the process of the record. The last few times of working with [engineer] Steve Albini, plus having more experience ourselves, has made this go by so fast. It was very natural and inspiring. We are so confident with our approach. Basically, all the songs are done before the studio, we just have to set up and play. Steve captures exactly that: us playing in a room. He is an engineer in the total classic sense and meaning of the word. He understands the electronics and the best way to use those electronics to capture exactly what is in the room. We set up and we do final takes. We finished, recorded and mixed this record in nine days, even though we [Von Till/Kelly plus drummer Jason Roeder, bassist Dave Edwards and keyboard/sampler/sound manipulation man Noah Landis] booked 10. It happened really fast. And the recordings became easier every time. Go back to the days of *Souls At Zero* or *Through Silver In Blood*, with all the tweaking we did—we practically almost killed it—to this time where it was so natural and flowing. Fast and easy flowing studiowise, easily our best effort yet."

Steve Albini has really helped the band over the years with his experience and guidance. Unlike an engineer/producer set in one main sound, Albini, in his long career, has always welcomed the opportunity to work with a varied assortment of bands. Neurosis is just one of many.

"People have a real strange interpretation of what his role is in music and what the role of an

engineer is. One thing that people don't seem clear on is that they keep calling him our producer. We have never had a producer for our music. Producing involves changing sound and putting in two cents about arrangement and how things are sounding. Nobody has ever done that or tried that with our music and if they ever did we'd send them to a hospital."

Really?

"Yeah," says Von Till clarifying the comment. "We are very attached to what we do and how we do things for Neurosis. Steve is great to work with because he records our music. He'll give an opinion whether it was a good take or if it sounds good or if you have spit on your lip and should try it again. That is what an engineer does. He is a real top-of-the-line old school analog-knowledgeable kind of engineer. I put him in a league up there with the masters. He really helped us with this record, like past ones, but this time we never had such a true studio experience. He's given us a sense of confidence to do what we do."

When talking to Von Till about the record, as in the past, it's obvious this whole musical experience runs very deep within him. He lives and breathes his music. This is his outlet for creativity, experimentation and growth. What inspired the makeup of *A Sun That Never Sets*? What was the mindset going in?

"It is really hard to say where this came from," comes the answer. "Like I said, the music of this band doesn't come from the mind. It emanates from the heart and the soul. You open yourself up to those energies and it just flows out. I think I had to come up with some underlying theme or emotion. I'd say it is one of transcendence, recognizing the past, taking honor and strength in that, feeling more fire and inspiration, and, finally, taking that into the future. That, to me, is the overwhelming theme."

A lot of people, including myself, have described this record as rather sedated, yet still with that vaguely familiar harshness. "I wouldn't say it with those words but I know what you are talking about," the guitarist responds. "To give it a try, I think we have already proven to

ourselves and whoever else who gives a shit that if we wanted to play the most crushingly destructive music, we are capable of doing that, but that isn't our intention. Our intention is to become as proficient as possible to represent the philosophies and energies we are dealing with. As our bodies, minds and souls mature, and we have more experiences, we will keep evolving in many ways."

"This record definitely has a lot more space in it," admits Kelly. "I think there is a lot of subtraction, as opposed to a super-jumbled multi-layered mix. To me, this record sounds like it is in the groove all of the time. It does not contain a whole lot of radical turns. It is a pretty smooth journey."

"I think it would be easy for us to be destructive but it wouldn't be necessarily the best choice. I think providing contrast is what makes music interesting," Von Till explains. "You can only be so heavy unless you give things space to breathe. In many ways, you can create a heavier emotion with less dissonance and less distortion. Once you uncover the broad spectrum of



how emotion is portrayed in music, some of the most beautifully subdued music can also be some of the most soul-wrenching heart-tearing music. For us, it is about purifying that. We have always had a soft dynamic and we have always had a harsh dynamic, but I think we wanted to have more melody. There is a lot more melody this time that came to the forefront. It made us re-examine our vocals and to accept the challenge. We could scream all the time, sure, but to let the melody drive the record, to control

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fire and restrain it, which is very difficult 'cause we feel it all the time, is something we worked hard to do. It's the difference between a forest fire and a bon fire. We could let it all erupt and burn everything in sight, but we are trying to control that and keep that in our back pocket for when we need to unleash it."

"We wanted to explore a different dynamic," he continues, warming to his subject. "We realized we had a whole untapped middle ground between loud/aggressive and atmospheric/soft. It's rather psychedelic, and we felt a challenge bringing it out. We actually needed to find those in-between sounds to create a balanced varied true picture of the state of our consciousness."

Kelly, obviously inspired by the articulate Von Till, adds, "We saw the bringing out of this whole melodic side that was always in us as something of a challenge. I believe we rose to the occasion. We were so up for it! We were confident about doing all of this because, in actuality, we've been into it to a degree for some time now, it's just that we never really shared it quite openly with anybody before. We approached each song this time with the idea that we would put the clean vocals up front and let it lead the music. We felt that would make it more of a 'song,' rather than just loud aggressive music. At this stage in our careers, trying new things like this keeps it exciting."

So is this Von Till and Kelly's favorite Neurosis album?

"It is by far my favorite Neurosis album," replies Von Till. "The day I don't make my favorite Neurosis then it is all over. This is my favorite record right now. And the next one will be my favorite one after this one. That is called evolution. If you stop evolving you stagnate and you die."

Kelly: "I think *A Sun That Never Sets* is really one of the best recordings I have ever had in terms of my guitar sound. I was fully satisfied all the way around for this record. We talked our way through a lot of ideas before the studio and got down to business."

Combing through its lyrics, I came across certain lines that stuck out to make an impact with each listen. In "The Tide," Von Till sings, "Where are they now/They are gone/I saw them run/Run to the sea." The way his words are sung are simplistic yet implicitly passionate. Do certain passages also make an impact upon the author or, as in many cases, is it the totality of the package that is impactful?

"I feel very emotional about the whole project," answers Von Till, "because so much of us

goes into a record. Even though we mask our personal experiences in poetry, certain things feel like landmarks. For us, in general, for instance, the title track is very important. It was the last song written. We revisited an old riff from years ago that came together in a half hour! The words just came out. I opened my mouth wanting to get it all down, and just grabbed a pen, and it poured out. It was some-



thing I had been thinking about that appeared in almost perfect form, and we were able to capture that."

Is that why that track is the title track?

"It made the most sense because of its double-meaning," Von Till explains. "In relationship to the song, a sun that never sets is a very self-reflective concept. I was contemplating mortality, immortality and ancestry. You come to this point where you realize as an individual that every cell in your body, every ounce of blood, is not your own. You are not an individual. You can act like an individual and live in a self-centered society where it may make you think that way, but there is no part of us that is not part of our ancestors. We are the merging of two great rivers: our mother's river and our father's river. These rivers go back to our grandparents and their grandparents and back to the very beginning of humanity in every single one of us. And over those thousands of years, to imagine the kind of things every one of your ancestor's generation had to live through to have their children survive so that you would end up here by some chance or fate is fucking insane. It is a fucking miracle that we are all here at all. For those hundreds of thousands of years people lived in caves and hunted animals and survived winter. They survived droughts and protected their children from harm. When you put yourself in that perspective, it really gives you a sense of pride, strength and inspiration."

"I take a very great sense of responsibility in the fact that they did not accomplish all that just so you could live some shitty existence," Von Till pauses. Then continues, "They did this so you

could live a life of meaning, worth, inspiration and continuing that legacy — to continue that bloodstream. That is what is meant by a sun that never sets, because in our descendants is our immortality. I believe that in genetics more is passed on than physical traits. There's spirit, emotion and family karma passed on from generation to generation. In a way, and these are not the correct words for it, but this is some sort of a biological and spiritual reincarnation along our family lives. As many of us are raising kids, we are not seeing ourselves as the end of the river, but rather a stone along the river. We need to raise our kids properly and give them wisdom to figure out this crazy world and carry on what is important about humanity, civilization and the importance of our ancestors."

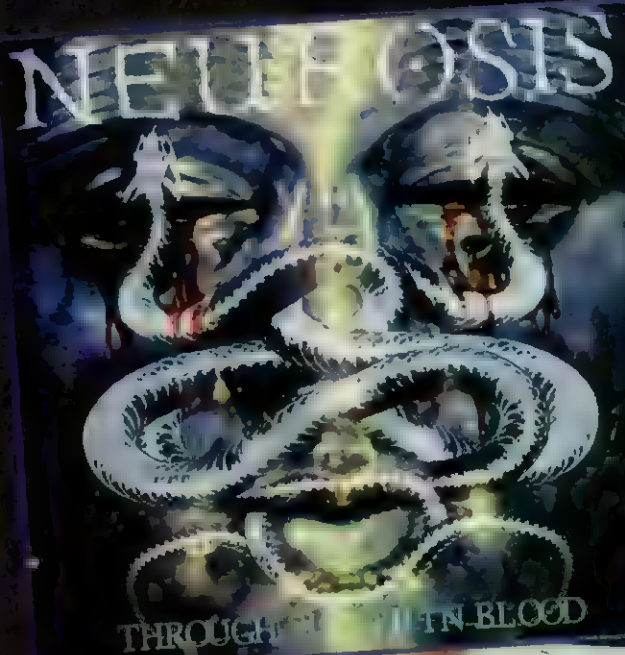
Von Till notes, "If you want to look at it from a band perspective, it just goes along with what we have said about us having this fire within us. This fire is never going out. Every year the fire gets brighter and seems to be lasting longer and it just seems to carry on for us. Time is our greatest resource."

Neurosis has always triumphed at what it does. Fans around the world, as well as its peers, have acknowledged that. Does the band ever think about what it has accomplished and how it has influenced the music scene? Or do they just see themselves as another band doing their thing?

"We definitely don't see ourselves as just another band," states Von Till. "We have sacrificed too much to think that. But we also don't put ourselves on a pedestal with some sort of expectation of what other people should think about us. We only know our importance to ourselves. People point out to us the extent of our influence all the time and sometimes I think it's valid and sometimes I think people are making it up, but I am sure we have had some kind of influence on music. And if so, I hope people will hold us up as an example to constantly resist compromise and to go and find your own original, heartfelt and uncategorical music. That is what I want out of music."

"To me," he continues, "I don't understand why people want something different out of music. I think it is perfectly valid for people to make beautiful pop music if that is their passion and all the power to them, but if music is ~~about~~ of some deeper substance then it is just not interesting. I think music exists in the first place because man was trying to communicate something indescribable, like communicating the mystery of existence. I think our music has been on a journey contemplating that and our personal reactions to that all along."

So when does Neurosis decide it is time to make a record? Do they just sense it? Or



It must be hard to balance the band and the label as well as family, friends and life itself. "It is a maniacal amount of responsibility," Von Till agrees, "but it is all driving from that central fire and purpose of the band. As long as we pay attention, keep it centered on grass roots, we shouldn't have problems."

So has it all been worth it? "Absolutely," he responds rapidly. "It defines who we are. We have been this for our entire adult lives. We have other things that define us and other identities in the world, but this

like their material before heading into the studio—is it planned?

Says Von Till, "I think the records that were three years apart, we were in a different headspace. Life wasn't as organized. We were on the road in more choppy bits and pieces, but with many tour dates all in a row. It was hard to get it all down. I think now our writing process has just sped up. We have so little time together because we are so busy with jobs, families and business, so we try to make every minute count. When we get together now, we get it done pretty quickly. It also has to do with us being able to open up more completely to the spirit of Neurosis. Often at times we feel like mediums letting it [the spirit] flow through us."

One element of the band that has managed to grow from a stoic determination to create and support unique music is the birth of Neurot Recordings, home to bands like Isis, Zeni Geva, Vitriol and Tarentel. About the formation of the label and where it is headed, Von Till elaborates, "I just get so excited thinking about it. Finally we are about to put our music in our own context. I want to be able to put a deeper context on music. We feel an affinity to artists and musicians that truly transcends category. This label is very important to me. I also think it is cool for us to introduce bands that we think are important to our fan base."



has been an intense journey. It has been an inspiring life for me and I am thankful every day that I am a part of this. Being in this band has definitely influenced the way I look at the world. "Everything else I do, whether it be work or raising a family, it will be done with the same passion I have learned from being in Neurosis."

NEUROSIS Select Discography

Pain Of Mind—1988, Alchemy
The World As Law—1992, Lookout
Souls At Zero—1992, Alternative Tentacles
Enemy Of The Sun—1993, Alternative Tentacles
Pain Of Mind—1994, Neurot
Through Silver In Blood—1996, Relapse
Times Of Grace—1999, Relapse
Sovereign—2000, Neurot
A Sun That Never Sets—2001, Relapse

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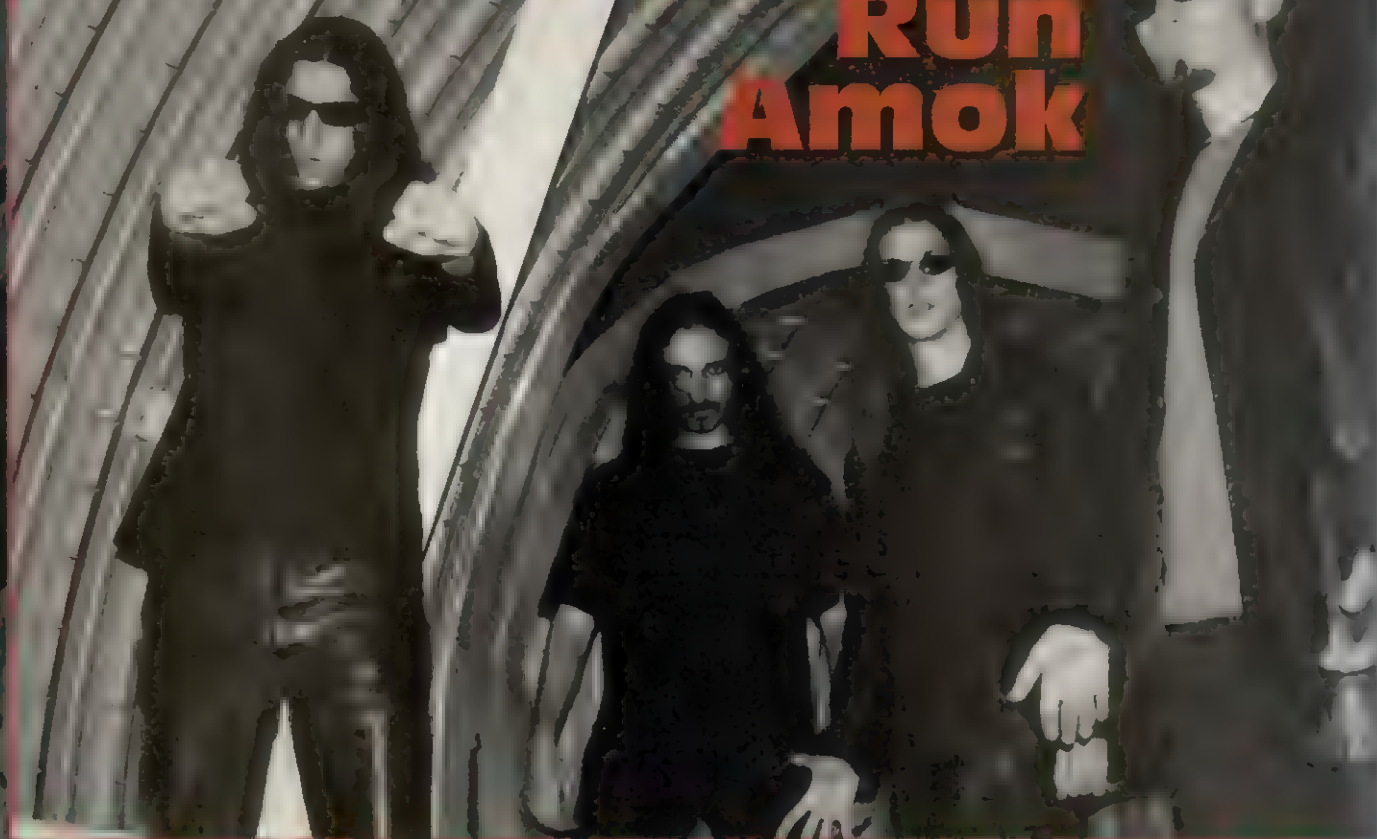
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MEGA VISION



Changes Run Amok



SIRIUS

by Adrian "The Energizer"
Bromley

For those of you who came in contact with avant garde/black metal Portuguese act Sirius via *Aeons of Magick*, be prepared to be stunned by the progression the band has made with *Spectral Transition*—*Dimension Sirius* (Nocturnal Art).

As guitar player/ringleader Draconis explains, changes were necessary. "I think this is the record we should have made on our debut but weren't able to do at the time. Listening and hearing what kind of production we were able to achieve makes me feel good that we saw what was lacking and acted. The first record had a really weak production and I always hated that, but we had to deal with it. It was always on my mind as we went in to record the follow-

up. I knew we had to step up production a bit. We knew what we wanted on *Spectral Transition*—*Dimension Sirius*. It all came together quite quick. The sounds here are great. I'm so pleased with how the record turned out. We've been receiving a lot of good feedback. This is what I want to see.

"I also think our sound has changed quite a bit with the new record," he continues. "I think that has a lot to do with new influences who weren't there in the past or as much, or maybe we just grew tired of the earlier sound. This record is a good mix between the black and death metal scenes with even a slight hint of thrash metal and some new electronic/industrial components. In any case, the new record's sound is where we want to be in 2001. There were a lot more keyboards this time around as well."

Will fans be able to see what the band is doing and accept it?

"I think so. Like I said, response has been good to this record. We tried to really bring the old ideas into what we did, like the symphonic sound, but it just doesn't work where we are headed. This record can't be compared to the older one. We just wanted to change and I think it shows when you put them back to back."

One interesting element of *Sirius*'s work is their collaboration on the new album with Faust, the incarcerated ex-Emperor drummer. The guitar player explains, "We really wanted to help get Faust back into the music scene. We thought by having him work with us it would help him out. Because he is serving time in prison, we had to approach him and set it up a few months in advance to see if he could collaborate with us. He was able to get a 30-day pass to come out and record with Samoth, who runs Nocturnal Art (and is Emperor/Zyklon), joined in as well seeing

he was at the studio all the time, as did Daemon from Limbionic Art (also in *Zyklon*). The whole idea of covering Emperor's 'The Majesty Of The Nightsky' came out of us just hanging around in the studio and drinking a lot. We wanted to do the song, but with different vocal parts and trying to get the song more varied. We wanted to try new things and everyone who helped us out made a strong effort to bring a unique sound to the cover song."

Not many bands choose to cover the greats, especially when it comes to a band as influential as Emperor. Why them?

"We just wanted to do something that we really didn't know how to play. They inspired us early on for sure, but we never set out to say this was the song we would cover. It really is a great song and I think we did a good job, with the help from our friends, in doing justice to the song. When we started off, a lot of people said we sounded like Emperor, so this seemed like a good idea for us to show how different we can be. This song sounds nothing like the original."

He adds, "People have always stated the Emperor comparisons, but when Samoth signed us, he made no comparison to us and his band. He certainly did not sign us because we were like his band. He signed us because he believed in what we were doing. To be able to work with

Samoth and his label has been a great experience because Emperor is one of the greatest bands of the '90s. They are so influential. They were always charting out new ideas when everyone else was playing death metal and making it boring."

Coming from Portugal, a country home to hundreds of metal bands, Draconiis knows that very few bands have ever made names for themselves on a grand scale from there. Moonspell is one of the few. How does that make him feel, and is it a challenge for him to put his band (and country) on the metal music map?

"We have always been trying to get our name out," assures Draconiis, "but it has taken some time. When we signed with Nocturnal Art, people started to take notice of us, a band from Portugal. The first album on Nocturnal Art did really well for getting our name out. Even though the label is a small label with few bands, they did a good job of making people become aware of who Sirius was. It was an important step for us with these two albums to get our names out there and people to know our music."

"Now things are starting to change for us," he reveals. "We just finished our two-album contract with Nocturnal Art and are now signing with Nuclear Blast. I think after this record

came out, people really took note of us and realized what they could do for Sirius with the right promotion and distribution."

Does Draconiis feel good about going to Nuclear Blast? How did Samoth react to the news? "He was okay with this. He knows it happens. We are very good friends so he understands. Just the business part has ended between us and we have moved on. Our contract with him was for only two records and we decided after that that we'd try to move into another label. We can't just stay on the label with him because he is our friend. We want this band to grow and prosper on a larger scale so we hooked up with Nuclear Blast."

When can we expect a new album? "We are going to start recording it in January/February of 2002, so I guess fans of the band can expect it to be out in the fall of 2002. This is a big step for us, but I think we are ready for it. I know there will be pressure, but we can deal with it. When we made *Aeons Of Magick*, no one expected it to be as good as it was and the same goes for *Spectral Transition - Dimension Sirius*. We knew we had to do a better job. When we start on the debut for Nuclear Blast, it will be the same kind of pressure and we'll be able to handle it. Making records for us is a treat



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SIRIUS

continued



because we like to get further away from what we have done, musically and in the production. It'll be interesting to see how this all works out. A lot of things are happening for the band right now, and by the time the new disc surfaces, we should be in top form mentally and musically."

Going into a bit of detail about the untitled Nuclear Blast debut, he says, "There are many different concepts in the lyrics and in the music. I think we will be able to do something out of the ordinary and fans will like that. We just want to push the boundaries of extreme metal music. Hopefully it will be a kickass album. I think people will be surprised about the way it turns out. Finally we are getting the right amount of time and

money to work on the record, something that really wasn't there before."

Hearing the determination in Draconis' voice about the role of songwriting and how important it is to him, I ask if it gets easier as the years go on to make music. Or is it a burden to constantly create?

"The ideas come pretty easy to me," he states. "This is very natural for me to be creative. But in order for it to be 100% the way you want it to end up and/or sound like, it takes a lot of hard work. All musicians need to come to realize that it isn't about the talent, but also about how hard you work to achieve your goals. You might have loads of talent and good ideas, but if you don't work to achieve them, it

won't be worth it."

Of late the Sirius website (www.neverbefore.com/sirius/) has been down, with the explanation of addressing "a few important steps" regarding the band's future. "The guys who were supposed to be working on the website weren't," comes the honest answer, "we didn't have time to add stuff, instead of not having it updated or people thinking we were dead, we decided to close it down and put a statement from the band about what was going on, about us searching for a new label, and we are going to make an effort to have a new image and running to go along with our image and sound when the disc comes out next fall. We have a whole disc planned. We also replaced our old singer with a new one. Things are indeed changing for us. We think that these changes are only making us stronger as a band. We are getting ready to open up our music to a whole new group of people through Nuclear Blast."

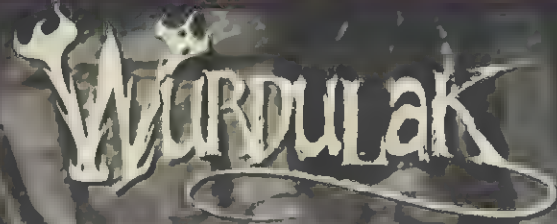
Sirius has obviously embraced these changes in ideas, sound and direction. Hasn't there been a mass rejection within today's metal scene, to try new ideas and explore different kinds of music? "I think a lot of bands just follow the band's ideas and art as copycats," he quickly says. "That has been the case for a while now, it becomes annoying. But then there are bands out there who are making an effort to push boundaries, becoming innovative and enhancing their music. Those are the bands that people should follow."

"I am fond of bands like Celtic Frost that were true to their roots but not afraid to try new things," says Draconis. "Every band should be like Celtic Frost. Bands should not be afraid to experiment. I always wanted to get Sirius to reach this level of being able to make that we want to do and bring our fans with us. Not everyone will come with us, that happens when people only want a certain style/sound from a band."

I find myself sometimes asking, "Why invest so much time with this band and music?" I always come up with the same answer. "I love metal. Whether it be me waking up in the morning and cranking metal music while having breakfast or working part-time to save money for the band, I know that this metal attitude runs throughout all of us in the band."

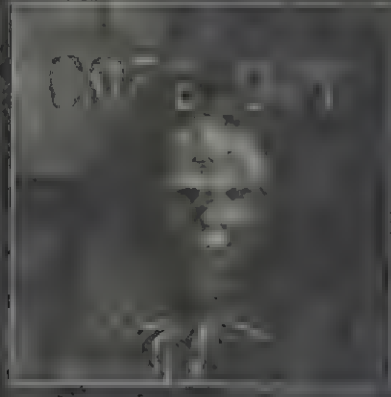
He ends, "The only time we'll stop playing metal music is when people don't care any more. I hope that is a long time away."

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FIRING SQUAD

demo reviews: the best (and the rest) of the unsigned

by Adrian Bromley

So, I guess I'm the new guy, eh?

I bet you readers never expected a Canadian to review these demos. Hey, stranger things have happened, I mean, you Americans went and elected George W. Bush as your President, for Christ's sake! [For the record, he was not elected, in fact he *lost* the election, but the Supreme Court installed him into the White House—Mike G]. Be that as it may, anyone who hates what I'm gonna write can get in direct touch with me at energizerbunny@sympatico.ca [That might be your first mistake, especially if you start getting communiques from that asshole from East Milwaukee who signs his letters "Eat Shit."—Mike G again].

I was unsure of how to start my first column.

Should it be funny? Should it be super-serious? After many hours of drinking gallons of Pepsi and sifting through the large pile of demos, I decided to go about it naturally. I don't need to be a certain way just to impress. I'm actually a demo fan of sorts. I live to discover independent bands. I've been writing for years and appreciate the work that goes into a recording.

And the lucky first offering: South Africa's **Misericord**. I must admit to not knowing too many



bands from this country. The ruthlessly volatile Groinchurn hails from the same continent, I know that. Far from their grind-core stylings, this quintet plays rather simplistic death metal with classic metal guitar. Its dual ax attack of Ralf Globish and Jason Gaicoppo is reminiscent at times of old Iron Maiden, though not nearly as skillful as Dave Murray and Adrian Smith. "Everglade" and the cool retro flow of "Make A Wish (And

Moving away from the far-off African continent, our next demo brings us stateside to Ohio for **Liquid Nation**. From the getgo, I wasn't too impressed with their mixture of aggressive rock, bizarre chanting and over-the-top clichéd heavy metal/power metal-like vocals. I'll give the band credit for having somewhat of a tight groove-oriented sound, but the vocals of Mike Drasier (doing his best Warrel Dane impression) really get on my nerves. It must be something about the approach that sends me running, as it seems to be trying too hard to impress people with his vocal talent. Tone it down a bit! Not even some sharp guitar riffs can save this one from falling to the wayside. Their ideas are below average. Their execution falters. Arrangements sound cluttered. Hey, some bands need time to grow and work out the kinks in their sound. **Liquid Nation c/o Sean Riley, P.O. Box 69, Milford, OH 45150-0069**

From Ohio to Missouri: When I saw the name **Unicorn** in my pile, I immediately thought of Dan Swano's band that has become somewhat

Think Of Me)" add variety to what could have been a mediocre offering, but in reality shows promise. While the demo does have a spotty production, with a bit of tweaking here and there, Misericord could do some damage. If interested, contact **Unquiet Mind Management, P.O. Box 5281 Horizon 1730, Gauteng, Republic Of South Africa. E-mail: info@misericord.com URL: www.misericord.com**

legendary. I was bummed to discover it was but a violent death metal act with a four-song demo, *The Final Digression*. Then, I was impressed by its intensity! I cranked up the powerful "Descent," with its mad drumming, sinister guitar riffs and deep death metal growls. Nice. While no doubt inspired by the likes of Suffocation, Obituary and Nile, Unicorn has a bit of work ahead if it wants to see itself tearing up clubs. A tightening-up is in order. The guitar solos take away from the aggressive and brutal nature of some of the material. Destructive at times, Unicorn delivers its death as if it was a rookie linebacker on a football team, hitting the line hard, but not hard enough. \$5 to Unicorn c/o Steve Allington, 1428 N. Grant, Springfield, MO 65802. E-mail: metal1253@netzero.net

From Missouri to Iowa, from death to ballistic thrash, **Avenger Of Blood** picks up the pace with Slayer-like guitar riffs and enough bloody anarchy to make classic Destruction or Sodom sound happy. In just under 25 minutes, thanks to the solid war-like opening of "Arrival," Avenger Of Blood makes you feel like you are in the midst of a battle zone, with shrapnel and explosions on either side of you as machine gun fire whizzes above your head. "Fallen Entity" is definitely the gem of the five-song demo, with

its rough vocal choruses working alongside some stellar guitar work. Far from original, Avenger Of Blood plays tight fast thrash that really hits the target. Worth investigating and well worth \$7. **Eric Greaney, 219 Brady St. #4, Davenport, IA USA 52801. E-mail: avengerofblood@hotmail.com**

From Iowa to Arkansas: Now we're in a groove, not only geographically, but musically. Vore's *Lord Of Storms* offers a mix of thrash and death with a brutal edge. The presentation and sound is more professional than any band so far this column, but is that a reason to charge \$14? True, they are dynamic. Equally impressive is the solid guitar work/vocals from Page Townsley and John Voelker. These two guys really set the music in motion with an impressive array of ideas, from heavy growls to acoustic guitar work ("Opaque"). Nothing seems forced or out of place here as Vore move from track to track (check out "Host Of Abominations" and "Agony"), beautifully mastering their metallic craft, while unafraid to add new visions and elements to their sound. Almost any fan of metal music will find solace in the works of Vore. **Vore, P.O. Box 8425, Fayetteville, AR 72703-0008. E-mail: vore@vore.org URL: www.vore.org**

OK, how 'bout some fellow Canadians already, eh? **Elektrik Mistress** really know how to send stoners searching for rolling papers and their stash. Managing to take control of a rather loose, '70s-sounding stoner rock vibe, guitarist/singer Keith Kuthe plays his heart out on this psychedelic roller coaster ride. Shades of *Superjude*—era Monster Magnet are everywhere on this 11-song demo, as is their homage to classic Black Sabbath. The production is ace, thanks in part to the work of producer extraordinaire Terry Brown (Rush, The Who). Trippy, heavy and downright lethal, the music of Elektrik Mistress is like a good

more

Vore's *Lord Of Storms* offers a mix of thrash and death with a brutal edge.

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Travel south across the Canadian border and the first city you'll end up in is Detroit where you'll hear 1000 Yard Stare's violent rage. Opener "Disease" gets the blood boiling as this intense noise-filled metal quartet truly detonates upon impact. While I thought things would then die down a bit, "Gain Ill-gotten" and "Man Of The 11th Hour" just get angrier, so incredibly potent it's scary. Singer Tony Wright's vocals are sharp, to-the-point and super-aggressive while the band wreaks havoc with totally extreme sound. At just over 12 minutes, this self-titled punch comes to an abrupt close and you're left wanting more. Best thing to do is play it again. And again. 1000 Yard Stare, P.O. Box 574, Wyandotte, MI 48192-9998. E-mail: deadguy73@hotmail.com URL: www.1000yrdstare.com

Skeletor plays passionate metal with tight riffs in the vein of a scaled-down Iced Earth and/or Manowar with some vintage '80s thrash for added inspiration. Its five-song disc, *Baked*

basic blueprint. You've heard all the solos. You've absorbed all the vocal cries. You've head-banged to all of these ideas for 15 years now. I might have got real excited about this in the late '80s. Not now. Skeletor, 5237 Hermitage Ave., #2 North Hollywood, CA 91607. E-mail: Skeletor666@mail.com

On to Alaska for the two-man Mirkvid, gothic-tinged pseudo-black metal featuring ample keyboards. Its 10-song *Transylvanian Backbeat* harkens back to an '80s New Wave Goth that oftentimes is dated, hardly metal, and excessive on the keys. Had they gone in a more Cradle Of Filth direction, they might've been able

Alaskans, is described in the enclosed bio as "blistering slabs of metal music." Far from it but not in a bad way. "Violation" is a toe-tapping gear kicker. "The End Of Time" and "In The Shadows" follows a pretty

to get through this. Only the distorted vocals and the almost-black ideas barely squeezed Mirkvid herein. \$7 to Jason Damm, 3808 W 79th Ave. #4, Anchorage, Alaska 99502 E-mail: mirkvid@hotmail.com

For all the nu-metal kids who think Slipknot is the heaviest thing coming out of Iowa, then the obviously haven't heard the thundering sound of *Burnout*. Heavily inspired by the likes of Fu Manchu, Entombed, Motorhead and, of course, Black Sabbath, Burnout rumbles through an intense 48 minutes of sweet sonic bliss on *Thundertits*. I haven't been this excited over stoner rock in a long time (other than Astroqueen's *In Submission*). These guys are good at what they do, managing to pull a lot of diverse '70s-inspired ideas into the bashing groove-like ways. And unlike most stoner records where the band let loose for a few songs and then you grow tired, Burnout holds your attention for the whole disc, and the ride is definitely worth it. Man, this rocks! If you're in the mood to sit back, swig beer and rock out, there is nothing better than Burnout at \$10 (USA) or \$12 (world) to Tim Matthews, 11911 Hwy 99, Lot 31, Burlington, WA 98601. URL: www.burnout666.freesevers.com E-mail: bgdaddy666@aol.com.

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MAYHEM



playlists



There's No Accounting For Taste....

ALEX CAMARGO, *Krisiun*
Motorhead, *Sacrifice*
Morbid Angel, *Altars Of Madness*
Slayer, *Reign In Blood*
AC/DC, *Highway To Hell*
Centurian, *Chorozonic Chaos*
Gods

ERIC PETERSON,
Dragonlord
Iron Maiden, *Brave New World*
Emperor, *Live Emperial Ceremony*
Lacuna Coil, *Unleashed Memories*
Dimmu Borgir, *Puritanical Euphoric Misanthropy*
Arch Enemy, *Wages Of Sin*

SEAN MCGRATH & ROSS SEWAGE, *Impaled*
Bolt Thrower, *For Victory*
Faith No More, *Angel Dust*
Pungent Stench, *Been Caught Buttering*
Stevie Wonder, *Inner Visions*
Godspeed You Black Emperor,
Show Riot For New Zero
Kanada EP

ROB ALOI
Abigor, *Satanized*
Averse Sefira, *Battle's Clarion*
Internal Bleeding, *Alien Breed*
Cathedral, *Carnival Bizarre*
Monstrosity, *Enslaving The Masses*

PROFESSOR BLACK
Zeke, *Death Alley*
Metalucifer, *Warriors Ride On The Chariots 12"*
Lykathea Aflame, *Elvenefris*
Absu, *Tara*
Exhorder, *Slaughter In The Vatican* (especially the drums)

ANNEMARIE BOWMAN
Ancient Rites, *Dim Carcosa*
Krisiun, *Ageless Venomous*
Primordial, *Imrama And Journey's End Reissues*
Loreena Mckennit, *The Mask And Mirror*
Machine Head, *Supercharger*
Movie: Almost Famous

ADRIAN BROMLEY
Anathema, *A Fine Day Exit*
Astroqueen, *Into Submission*
Neurosis, *A Sun That Never Sets*
Rebillion, *Annihilation*
Six Feet Under, *True Carnage*
Movie: The Others

VINCENT CECOLINI
Necrophagia, *Cannibal Holocaust*
Transatlantic, *Bridge Across Forever*
Viking Crown, *Banished Rhythmic Hate*
Fantomas, *The Director's Cut*
Six Feet Under, *True Carnage*
Movie: Apocalypse Now Redux

LIZ CIAVARELLA
S.O., *Eye Poppin' Music*
Soilent Green, *Deleted Symphony For The Beaten Down*
Crowbar, *Sonic Excess In Its Purest Form*
This Day Forward, *Fragments Of An Untold Story/Decimate, In The Name Of A God* (tie)
Stinkin' Lizaveda, *III*
Book: Zodiac, Robert Graysmith
Movie: S.O.D., Speak English Of Live (The part where Billy bashes that kid)

RYAN DOWNEY
Celtic Frost, *Everything*
Danzig, *Lucifuge*
My Dying Bride, *Everything*

Placebo, *Black Market Music*
Slayer, *Reign In Blood*
Movie: The Others

MIKE G
Heidnik, *S/T*
Grudge, *Forgiveness*
Attention Deficit, *The Idiot King*
Dragonlord, *Rapture*
Krisiun/Immolation, *Wetlands*,
NYC, 8/27/01
Book: Blonde, Joyce Carol Oates
Movie: Bamboozled, Spike Lee

WADE GOSSELIN
Pig Destroyer, *Prowler In The Yard*
Pig Destroyer, *38 Counts Of Battery*
Origin, *S/T*
Opeth, *Blackwater Park*
Grade, *Headfirst Straight To Hell*
Movie: Requiem For A Dream

MARK GROMEN
Grave Digger, *The Grave Digger*
Tristania, *World Of Glass*
Destruction, *The Antichrist*
Arch, *Another Return To Church*



Hill (Reissue)
Heavenly, *Sign Of The Winner*

MATT JOHNSEN
Sonata, *Arctica*, *Silence*
Eldritch, *Reverse*
Royal Hunt, *The Mission*
Beyond Twilight, *The Devil's Hall Of Fame*
Shadowdance, *Ageless*

BLAKE KUEHN
Shadows Fall, *Dead World EP*
Armored Saint, *Nod To The Old School*
The Cult, *Beyond Good And Evil*
Destruction, *The Antichrist*
Depeche Mode, *The Singles*
Movie: The Gift
Book: The Celestine Prophecy,
James Redfield

RON STRAUSS
V/A - Twisted Forever: A Tribute To The Legendary Twisted Sister
Chainsaws And Children, *Daca*
Belphegor, *The Kingdom Of Glacial Palaces*

Workin' Stiffs, *Dog Tired... And Then Some*
Upheaval, *Testimony To The Atrocities*

S. CRAIG ZAHLE
Diamondhead, *Living On Borrowed Time*
Dio, *Dream Evil*
Nargaroth, *Black Metal Ist Krieg*
Impiety, *Skullfucking Armageddon*
Sigh, *Imaginary Sonicscape*
Movies: Cure, Audition, And Bully

Fast Forward

by Blake C. Kuehn

"I think he saw we had raw sound, decent songwriting and good hooks, but we definitely needed to hone in more." The speaker is No One vocalist Mark. He's talking about producer Johnny K (who responsible for much of Disturbed's studio personality). "He didn't really change our sound. He just helped get our songs together to a point where it made us a more mature band, instead of a garage band. He took what we had and turned us into a signed national act. He gave us the perception of what the music business was like and how serious we had to take things. He was also a friend of ours."

One of life's universal truths is that it's not what you know but who you know. I must admit when a publicity kit for No One came across my desk, my first reaction was all-out incredulity. "What the hell is Editor Mike G up to?" I thought after hearing his phone message and figuring he was joking when he asked me to "interview no one" at an L.A. gig. Hmmm. It took awhile until I realized it wasn't no one, or just anyone, it was Chicago's No One. Big difference. Then, after headphones, Mark's upchucks, B-Larz's guitars, Flare's bass and Billy K's drums, I quickly realized No One could, indeed, cut the proverbial mustard. Those in the Los Angelino crowd where I anonymously settled myself just nights later, thought the same thing. The live setting is the great equalizer, y'know.

L.A. can be a tough crowd but Mark thought otherwise. "It was great," he panted when I finally got to talk to him. "Everyone was telling me the crowd was going to be really lame. 'They'll sit there with their arms crossed,' I was warned. 'Don't expect any reaction.' But that wasn't the case at all! The crowd was great.

People were jumping around and cheering. It was probably the most fun show that I've played on that tour without a doubt. During the first two songs everyone was just looking at us trying to get a feel for our vibe. By the third or fourth song, we had them."

But it was more than just about playing in Los

NO ONE



Angeles that made the gig special. "Everyday everyone at the label is working on our band but none of those people have ever seen us play live before," Mark continues. "It was really great to play for them — everyone at Immortal and Virgin, our radio promoters, even our managers. They saw us play in our practice space but they had never seen us play live. It was a great way to show everybody what we can do."

"For my whole childhood, I loved bands like Metallica, Black Sabbath and Pantera," the somewhat mild-mannered vocalist elaborates. Hoping that their music will appeal in some form or fashion to every type of metal enthusiast, from the phattest of nu-metal listeners in the

old-school thrash curmudgeons such as myself, No One has been able to toe the line between its past and present-day influence. "Our overall goal was to have an album as diverse," Mark simply states. "We didn't want to pigeonhole ourselves with a completely insular sound."

To mix it up and have a wide variety of songs. People who like early Metallica like it. People who like Slayer like it! When I talk to people everyone has a different favorite song. That's good sign!"

With hopes their sound will offer something new, what stands out is their unerring sense of purpose. Mark: "To be successful, all the components have to be working. There are so many bases to cover and obstacles to jump when trying to be successful and sell records. Obviously the band has to have it together. These guys are

definitely playing their instruments. The last thing we want to do is see our dream die. We have a single that's getting added to radio stations more and more every day ["Chemical"]. Right now we have like 36 to 40 stations and each week we get 5 to 10 more. We're hoping when the album comes out mid-August, we'll have 80 stations playing us! By then we'll have done a lot of those Ozzfest shows so we should definitely build up momentum. That should trigger a lot of opportunities from that point on."

No One (Official Website: <http://www.noone-music.com>) is definitely what's known around the Metal Maniacs office as "Maniacs material." And that's the bottom line.

by Liz Gavarella

"I personally think Myrkskog offers this whole new [subgenre] of metal. It's really intense, brutal, utterly aggressive and [has] more of an 'American style' sound. Since I'm more into death metal than black metal, I have to admit I find the American scene much more satisfying than the Norwegian one. But don't get me wrong, there are some good bands from Norway too and I respect what they're doing."

The speaker is guitarist Destructhor of Norwegian murderous metal machine Myrkskog. His words seem puzzling considering the pedestal the American underground tends to place Norwegian metal acts upon as well as Euro-metal in general. "Myrkskog is a band for the U.S. I fuckin' love American death metal and we got a lot of it in our music. Don't [get me] wrong," he continues, "the black metal scene is still strong and many of these bands are big. There are some good bands out there as well. But I found black metal more interesting some years ago."

Built upon the foundation of traditional black metal stylings with thrash and death metal subtleties and blatant anger, Myrkskog has come straight from the church burning lands of unholy mirth to fucking kill you. Featuring guitarists Destructhor (also of Zyklon fame) and Savant M., drummer Seithidamon and vocalist/bassist Master V, the band's most recent offering to date, *Deathmachine* (Candlelight) comes at you like a bat out of purgatory crossbreeding Slayer and Emperor and all things irreverent. The band seems instinctually fast and lyrically rate bleeding each note into a wall of visual rage.

Originally formed in 1993 as a three-piece featuring Master V, Destructhor and drummer Lars Petter, Myrkskog tunneled through countless lineup changes (at one time featuring Funeral drummer Eek before Odium guitarist Seithidamon would eventually remain a permanent fixture to the band on drums). Seated at the very cusp of the black metal explosion, Myrkskog's desire ironically wasn't to create the most sinful sounds on the scene but rather the most extreme.

After a brief break-up, the band regrouped and churned their debut *demo Ode Til Norge*, a blackened epic of unholy speed and lyrically visual prowess. Still though, the band was weak, internally plagued by continual lineup changes and general disarray. It wasn't until '97 when they secured a steady lineup to record a three-song sampler to shop with Candlelight, who eventually picked up the band, to release *Deathmachine*.

"Myrkskog's music is very intense, aggressive, hateful and brutal. The riffing is murderous and gives you visions of stabbing and strangulation," affirms Destructhor, "just listen to songs like 'Deathmachine' and 'Discipline Misanthropy.'"

The disc is indeed tripping: a perpetual torrent of fast-paced, searing emotion. "Discipline Misanthropy" starts it off with a bombastic blast-laden grenade of hyper-erratic rhythms complete with manic riff shifts and confrontational die-voxals. It coasts like that for a bit before stopping short long enough for you to smash your head into the windshield and swing you into a classic death metal breakdown in all its headbanging bountifulness (not a word but I know what you mean—Mike G) and when the air bags kick in just a wee bit too late, Myrkskog is hurling you right back into a black metal belly dance that escalates to the red zone on the speedometer. Before long you swear there's a drum machine in the house that evil built before a paralyzing choke hold sits you right back in the haze of a midpaced gush of debauchery, the occasional New York Death Metal guitar squeal, phleg-

and by the time their remix of "Syndrom 9" rolls in, you'll swear The Crystal Method and born again electro metalists The Kovenant were there chomping on the remains. The band wishes to delete this particular track. "In our contract with Candlelight, it says we have to make our albums last a minimum of 40 minutes. We finished *Deathmachine* under so we had to do something pretty quick, and we decided to make a remix of 'Syndrom 9,'" the guitarist recalls, "but I'm not very happy about this, so on the next album this will not happen!"

As an extreme metal band from Norway, it's a near assumption that these guys are nun-hating heathens but Destructhor simply states, "Don't follow anyone but yourself! I'm having a hard time understanding why people want to be a part of religious groups of any kind, with leaders [who] tell you what to think and how you shall live your life. Every human being has a brain. Unfortunately [not everyone] uses it! People are too fuckin' stupid to use their brains and they choose religion so they don't have to think for themselves. Wake up! Follow your instincts, there's no god but yourself. Be your own leader and master. Nothing comes to you. You have to

Myrkskog



many anger grows and Bum! It's back to trigger-ville where the skies are grey, the trees are dead and children cry for their dead rotting mummies. "A Poignant Scenario Of Horror" comes on thick with a Dimmu Borgir feel of controlled chaos, haunting background keys and an orchestrated brand of tightness. Nervous. Horrific. Racey. What makes this band hate so hard? With pent-up rage, trad death metal tendencies and an inherent Norwegian black metal edge, Myrkskog lies somewhere along the lines of a Satyricon/Immolation/Emperor plane crash

make it happen!"

Deathmachine is slowly gaining its warranted recognition here in the states, Myrkskog's future seems metallically bright. "Our future goals with Myrkskog," asserts Destructhor, "is to reach out to the whole world with our murderous aggression and mental blow-out that is in our music."

Candlelight Records -
<http://www.candlelightrecords.co.uk>



Fast Forward

by Liz Clavarella

The Transient Effects Of Light On Water: "During the Renaissance, painters and artists had a major conflict trying to capture motion on canvas, especially trying to paint bodies of water and, even more specifically, the reflections of light on water, because it's such a hard thing to capture on something stagnant like a piece of paper. It's a perfect metaphor for our band, you know, the way you can't truly capture something on CD. You can record a band but you never get the transient effects of it. It's this unexplainable thing in real life to [try to] understand, to comprehend." — Colin Frangicetto, This Day Forward

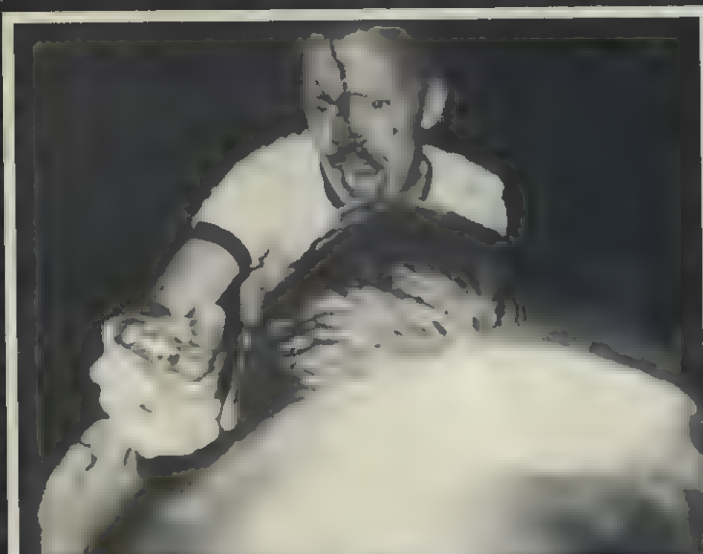
The more attached to a band I get, the more difficult it becomes for me to write about them — all my crap gets all lengthy and goosed together with feelings that even the strongest words I can muster can't do the band justice. Such is the case with Philadelphia-born This Day Forward.

It all happened at this year's Hellfest where the taken metal kid (me) wandered aimlessly between stages soaking in three full days of perpetual Converge-isms. Must have sweated off 10 pounds that weekend, dodged straight-edge kids, bought a very cool Three Stooges button, a Deadstoolpigeon CD and a soda. I roller-skated to the constant sounds of Stretch Armstrong and Idle Hands (someone pressed repeat and it stayed like that for approximately 72 hours). It was a liberating feeling, actually. Metalheads will always rule my world though different scenarios exist between the two. With metalheads, there's endless people to blab with and people to be blabbed, substances to consume, late night parties to be planned. By the time the schmoozing and boozing are done, you miss half the bands. Hell, the sound usually sucks anyway.

Hellfest was different. Outside of the people I came with and some random others, I was basically anonymous and where straight-edge rules the land,

my bright-eyed and bushy-tailed self was able to check out more than 70% of the action. Plus the sound was pretty damn killer! And so my story begins.

I'm at the main stage waiting for these This Day Forward guys. "Not another three-word band I have



THIS DAY FORWARD
the.transient.effects.of.light.on.water

to remember," I think to myself. Next thing I know there are legions of kids swarming the stage, the air that had only moments ago been moderately stifling was now dangerously suffocating. The three-word band I had only heard of in passing opened with a Refused cover ("Rather Be Dead") that sent Hellfest revelers into a scrotum-out, bras in the air, fist-to-the-grill frenzy. I watched kids ritualistically beat the foathers out of each other in pure, emotionally ignited glee. There were circle pits and pile-ons and hordes of dorky press people on stage trying to capture every glorious second of it on film. Songs like "Kissing Perfection's Cheek" and "If I Wore A Mask" sent onlookers staggering.

This Day Forward crams grating chugga build ups and breakdowns into ultra-passion fueled odes of profound imagery bordering the forbidden lands of emo but never quite crossing that forbidden line. Vocalist Mike Shaw wails like a stun-gunned lion giving every tune its own tortured identity. They're heavy in a poetic sense, as metalcore being their said tag but certainly not their *only* tag. Every tune is laced with possessed time shifts, jarring mood swings and at least one kill-something stamp part. They have no style, no schtick, no gimmick. They just thrash about seemingly tranquilized off their own personal states of ecstasy. On stage, the five-piece is connected by some inter cranial brain link feeding off each other spiritually, crafting that mood, maintaining that vibe, the one that makes everyone wanna clobber each other stupid, then hug.

At first I thought it was the lack of toxins in my body. Getting used to being moderately obliterated at every fest and suddenly seeing a band stone sober is next to experiencing a vision from St. Ignatius. By the time I got home and crammed in *The Transient Effects Of Light On Water* (Eulogy), it was clear this band was on its way to ruling the land. My blood rushed, goose bumps formed, I wanted to cry. I'm such a goddamn nimbler sometimes. Next thing I know I'm blabbin' to G about how this band must be the next "Fast Forward."

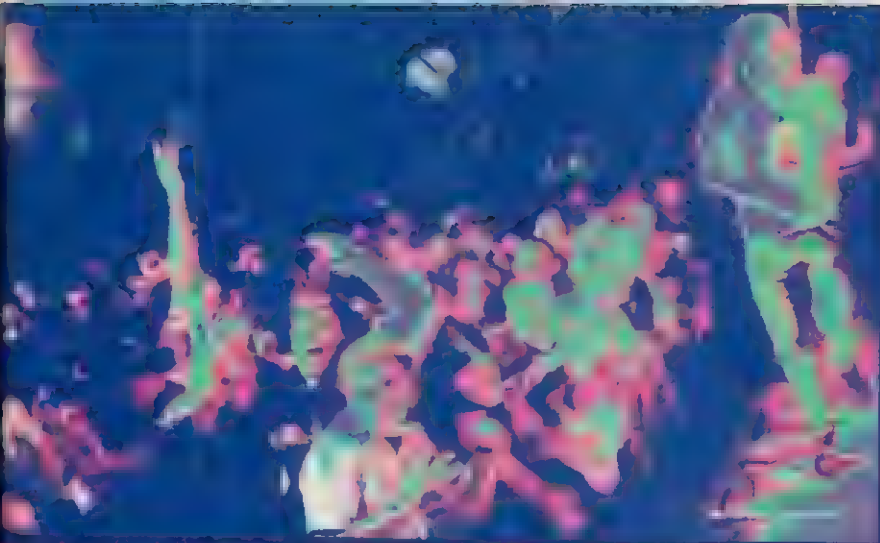
This Day Forward, barely five years old, began as an afterschool hobby among five guys with similar musical tastes. Featuring Shaw, bassist Gary Shaw (Mike's brother), guitarists Vadim Tover/Mike Galen and drummer Colin Frangicetto, they were the un-band with a bassist who'd never actually touched a bass before and a drummer who only owned a set but actually played guitar.

"It started out almost as a joke," begins Frangicetto, seeming as intrigued by the *Morlocks* writer on the other line as I was of him. "I was in another band called Makeshift. I met these guys in high school. They were the only people I ever knew who listened to bands like Mouthpiece and Front. We started hanging out on a regular basis and then all

of a sudden we were playing. My other band broke up so we got serious, concentrating on writing good songs, but also writing a lot of bad ones."

Good, bad or otherwise, TDF crafted war sonnets of aggressive beauty even during the baby stages. Influenced by the likes of Shelter, At The Drive In, Gorilla Biscuits, Converge and Deftones, TDF compose a melting pot of sounds and emotions that constantly interchange with each other. "We never really took advantage of what the songs we wrote could be," the drummer explains. "We had just gotten into the hardcore scene. We put the [more popular hardcore bands] on such a higher pedestal that we never thought it would go anywhere. We knew a couple of local bands in the area and we would just play at the Y and Mike's house. Eventually, people started coming and buying our demo, a four-song recorded in my basement. It was nothing. We sold 50 of 'em."

And the domino effect was on. 50 kids told their friends and those kids told their friends who told their cousins, uncles, roommates and girlfriends. Before long, TDF's guitar played at picnics, block parties and sporting events across the land, er, um, well, at small functions within the Philly hardcore scene. "Our songwriting started to mature with age. A natural progression, I guess," continues Frangicetto. "But it was Mike. He just creatively exploded and started writing amazing lyrics." Their lyrics are their most cutting quality. Abstract, visual dreamscapes of love, hate, regret and love coddled



in scream-soaked deliveries, thick guitar harmonies and roller coaster mood fluctuations. "We all started creating an idea of what kind of vibe we wanted as started to cultivate our sound. There were no "metalcore" bands in our area. We knew of Converge and we were just like, "Oh God, [if we could] do something like that."

The band wrote four new tunes before booking up with ultra-indy Break Even Records. The label pressed 1,000 copies of their full-length debut, *Fragments Of An Unlaid Story Born By Shunning The Opportunity*. Littered with grating breaks, cut throat anger and a rusted mailbox brand of sound quality, the disc was raw adrenaline and sold out after only a few months. The band became cult favorites, their name persistently floating around the scene even if most hadn't actually heard their stuff. Eventually Eulogy Records courted the band and thus TDE's godly *The Transient Effects Of Light On Water*.

It was Hellfest 2000 that gave them their real break though even before the record's release. "It's crazy how that happened," elaborates the drummer. "We had just signed to Eulogy. We were still basically an unknown band. We had no idea what to expect. We got there, sold all our demos right out of the bag! No one even heard it. We were supposed to have gone on at 11 a.m. but got pushed back and it wound up like 1,500 kids saw us! Kids were just going crazy! No one knew any of our words but we got a reaction. Mike split his head open on stage. Kids were coming up to the table afterwards with Mike's blood all over them. It really helped get our name out."

TDE are still hardcore oddballs, lumped into a genre they don't quite belong to, but wouldn't fit better anywhere else. Perhaps that's their drawing factor. "We're just sort of [trying] to break away from the typical sound and attitude or the way you're supposed to act or look on stage," admits Colin. "We're all huge fans of rock. I have complete and total respect for all hardcore. I grew up on it but I think a lot of hardcore bands neglect the fact that this is a branch of rock n' roll and there's still sup-

posed to be a show. Hardcore gives you the ability to fuck with everyone. I'm just myself onstage, so whatever's pissing me off, I'm gonna get it out!"

But wait. There were kids on the ground bleeding at Hellfest. "I mean, obviously we get a physical reaction when we play. When we go to shows, we're the kids standing in the corner in the back. We're definitely not into the whole violent aspect. There's been [so many] violent things associated with hardcore for a really long time but we're more about the physical expression [within the music] rather than anything remotely violent. As negative and cynical as we may come off on record, we're all just complete positive individuals."



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DARK FUNERAL

by AnneMarie Bowman

Sweden, February 2001 – Ever since 1990, when I first heard *Left Hand Path* by Entombed, I have had a fascination with Swedish Metal. Over the years, Sweden has rarely let me down. Band after band, album after album, the quality of the music coming from the heavy metal bands of this country has been top notch. Black metal, death metal, doomy gothic metal, this country is a powerhouse. What is it about the country that produces such high quality metal? Is it a phenomenon? I had to investigate. When it came time to take a much-needed vacation last winter, there was only one place I wanted to go. And what better way to experience Scandinavia than in the dead of winter? There is a method to my madness, you see. Heavy metal does not wait for the seasons to change. It was in the dead of winter that one of Sweden's premiere black metal bands, Dark Funeral, was booked into Peter Tägtgren's Abyss studios to record their much anticipated and long overdue third full-length album. And when little old me got an invitation to witness some Swedish musical mayhem first hand, sub zero temperatures be damned! This was a dream come true for someone who holds Sweden in such high regard when it comes to music. And Abyss studios, well that to me is the hall of the gods. I mean, just the thought that I would actually get to stand in the room where the albums that held the first two spots on my 1999 best of list (*Immortal*, *At The Heart Of Winter* and *Amon Amarth The Crusher*) were recorded was enough to make me shiver.

A Roller Coaster Ride With Satan.



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Vacations for me usually do not include much rest. Between sightseeing and visiting bands, I crammed in a couple hours of sleep. By the time came for the trip to Abyss, and the empire Peter Tägtgren built, I had been through three countries. The Old World charm of Stockholm captivated me, but alas, I had to leave it behind. My journey would take me far out from the normal places that tourists usually visit. The recording enclave is situated three hours north of Stockholm in the very small town of Parby. [Rumor has it that Peter owns every building in the town, which number about 12]. My Friend Diane and I climb into the car, our chauffeurs none other than the demon duo of Dark Funeral themselves, singer/bass player Emperor Magus Caligula and guitarist/songwriter Lord Alriman. As Diane and the guys chatter away on the long drive, I quietly stare out the window. My time to talk and ask questions would come later... Driving up from Stockholm the landscape climbs steadily uphill. As the snow accumulations get deeper and deeper, I cannot help but notice the beautiful scenery. By the time we're almost there, the sun is setting behind the rolling evergreen trees and snow-covered hills, sun rays twinkling off the water of a crystal blue lake like the sparkle of a diamond.

As twilight hits, we pass through the town of Ludvika, the last place with any signs of civilization before Parby, a good 30 kilometers away. Caligula steers the rental car across a small bridge and the next thing I know, it is as if we have entered another world. It is dark now, and we are on a two-

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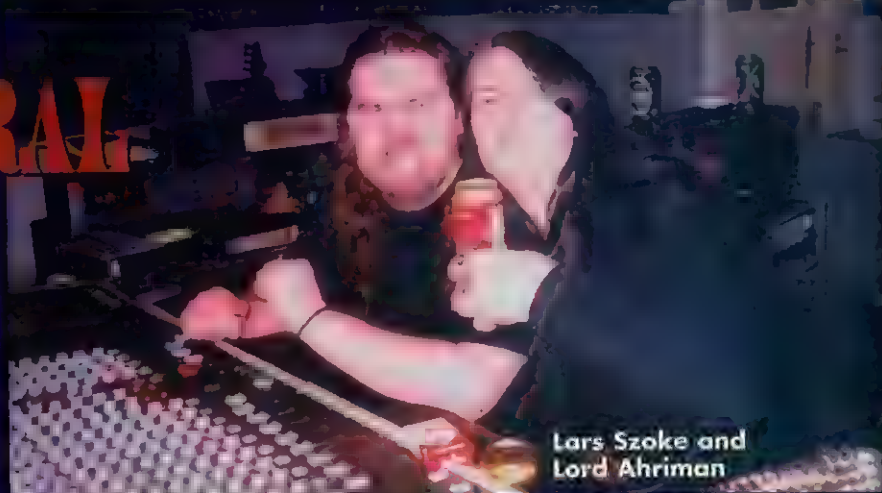
DARK FUNERAL

continued

lane road in the middle of the deep woods. The lights of our vehicle are alone out here, reflecting off the swirling snow. I start to get the creeps. My imagination runs away with me. Again. Suddenly we hit a clearing. Caligula points out a colonial style two-story house lit only by one lone electric candle in each window.

"This is Peter's house," he quietly says.

Pulling the car into the driveway of the next house down,



Lars Szoke and Lord Ahriman

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beyond

he explains that this is the band house, the place they call home for weeks or months at a time when they come to record out here in the middle of nowhere. The silence is deafening, our crunching footsteps on the ice seemingly amplified. As he helps me up the steps, Caligula looks me straight in the eyes. "This house is haunted," he tells me before we head inside.

I now have a full-on set of the creeps. Maybe it's nerves. Caligula decides the best thing for a case of nerves is to get me drunk. He starts describing the bar, bringing out his specialty, Red Bull and Vodka. As notorious as Swedes are for their music, they are equally notorious for their alcohol consumption and Dark Funeral is no different. I am obviously going to have to wait before seeing the studio and hearing their album. By the looks of the empty beer cans and scattered liquor bottles littering the floors, I can just imagine what might be in store for me tonight.

Fast-forward to the business portion of the evening. We walk with as many bottles as we can carry into the studio. It's cold. The recording complex looks smaller from the outside than it actually is. It's hours later. We've consumed much alcohol. The first room you hit upon entering is a small kitchen. Hats, coats and gloves peel off. I wait again as the guys stock the refrigerator, make drinks, laugh and chatter loudly in Swedish. I am introduced to Hypocrisy drummer Lars Szoke who will engineer, assisting Peter, who, by the way, will not be present (or so I am informed). Lars has been waiting. He has the tape all cued up and ready to go, but he wants to party.

I leave them to their drinks and wander off myself. I want to see The Room! I cannot wait any longer. Highly polished hardwood floors, a large curved black leather sofa and blue walls surround The Board. As I peer spellbound through the window of the studio, the red and yellow glow of the mixing board lights in my peripheral vision, I am seeing ghosts. The ghosts of Dimmu Borgir and Amon Amarth, of Immortal and Borknagar, and I imagine I feel it, the vibrations of all the powerful music recorded here. It is as if each and every band that has poured their lifeblood into their

music here, has left a part of themselves, a current that courses through the very foundations of this place. I fight the urge to touch things as I wait for my hosts, the band giving their lifeblood in Abyss now, Dark Funeral. Finally they appear, "So are you ready to hear the new Dark Funeral?" I am. Ahriman, who reminds me for the umpteenth time that what I am going to hear is not yet finished, joins us. Only five of the songs have vocal tracks laid down and it of course has not been mixed yet. Matte Modin, Dark Funeral's new drummer, has also arrived and as we scramble for seats, Lars hits the switch.

Adeptly entitled *Diabolis Interium*, the music explodes from the large speakers built right into the studio walls. As the first fiery notes flare out and consume me, I really *do* feel the lifeblood vibrations coursing through my body. The building is quaking, moving. The drums are way out in front of this rough mix recording, but it is the gui-

all so...so melodic(!) Easy to follow. It flows. It's rather experimental. "Hail Murder," "The Arrival Of His Majestic Empire," "Goddess Of Sodomy," we listen twice through before I am can untie my tongue.

Why experiment now?

Ahriman explains, "When we first came to Peter to discuss this recording months ago, we told him we wanted to develop. We were ready to take a big step, the next step. Dark Funeral has a sound. However, we wanted something new. We were hoping to do something groundbreaking. This is a very big step. We have tried new rhythms but we still sound like Dark Funeral. We wanted to be varied and progress, not just a little, but a lot, both musically and technically. To me, personally, it is a very big step, but I like it. The other guys got me to do stuff I thought maybe was too much of a change but they kicked my ass to try it out. "Goddess Of Sodomy" is maybe what people

might perceive us being too slow to be a Dark Funeral song. I wrote its main riff four years ago for *Vobiscum Satanas*. We tried many different arrangements, and although we liked the way it was turning out, we felt it didn't fit on that album. Personally, I do not think we were ready for that step at the time. So we have been fooling around with it in the rehearsal room for four years, but we always put it aside to use for later. About a year ago, Caligula started to push for it, saying 'We have to do that slow song!' When we got our new drummer, we brought it out and tried it with new arrangements. It is a good song, but I was very skeptical, because it is a slow song, and it was not anything we did before, but now I am very happy with it."

By the time the tape got to "Goddess Of Sodomy," the words "progression" and "experimental" were swirling around in my head. This song

is, indeed, slow and heavy with clean lead work and ends with a guitar solo. How important is it for a band to progress? Sometimes it's a double edged sword, that progression thing. If a band gets too far away from their sound, they are criticized. Nevertheless, if they stay too much the same they also are criticized.

Ahriman: "Up until we did the *Vobiscum* album,

I thought I had done everything I wanted to do with Dark Funeral music. At that point, it was so complete of an album for me. Then things happen in your life, you get older and have more experiences. We all agreed that we needed to find something new. We had to keep the roots of the sound, but we needed to progress. Most of the riffs, well, it was hard for me. I was writing lots of good stuff, but I felt it was too much in the same vein as *Vobiscum*. They had too much of the same feeling. We all agreed we needed something bigger. I would write stuff that I was not sure about. The guys would tell me, "even if you hate it show it to us anyway!" This worked because Caligula and Matte would like it and we would then work on it together. They taught me how to appreciate my riffs, and make them better. Sometimes we have to be the four of us so I can feel good about it."

Self doubt is in evidence here. The music you write must be important to you. It comes from inside of you and you feel the need to express it, so why do you say you hate the stuff you write? Are you too critical of your self? Ahriman quickly agrees. "I know I am and I work on it everyday! Believe me, it is not easy to be the way I am. Caligula helps me out with it a lot. I listen to him about stuff. I will show him something I have written, and I will be like 'yeah, I hate this though.' He will say to me, 'Well, we can do this and that, and it can be better.' Lots of times it will turn out really good. You have to be a band to do everything correct. I would not feel comfortable doing everything myself. I know that to get it good, you need input from someone else. You have to be a band. I am never fully satisfied until it is recorded. I mean, every riff I write has meaning to me. Everything has a point, but to get the whole picture and get a good song, everything has to be there. The vocals, the drums, everything. Then I can sit down, listen to it, and say to myself 'well, it sounds pretty good.' It has to be complete until it satisfies me. You will probably hear more slower stuff from us in the future, but the extremity will always be there. Dark Funeral is extreme, that is what we are about."

Some of the differences I hear are improved vocals and drums, and an overall heaviness. What do you think is the biggest difference between *Diabolis Interium* and *Vobiscum Satanas*? Ahriman tries to explain, "The speed is one thing. In places, this is a lot faster than our last album. In addition, it is more technical. They usually go hand in hand, because of the speed it has to be more technical. Also the arrangements and drum beats. New rhythms, new melodies. Unfortunately, not all the vocals are finished, so I can not comment on that. I can tell you about the music, Caligula can tell you about the vocals. One thing I can tell you though is that on this album, Caligula and I, we cared

continued on page 110



Caligula

for I really hear and it sounds immolating. The first thing I notice is that from the sound of these riffs, the *feeling*. Dark Funeral has matured and improved. This will be the work that sees them hitting their stride. The songs include much of Ahriman's signature riffage. The arrangements seem much more thought out. The parts are shorter. There are more midtempo/slower breaks. It's

Armored Saint



ned to the
old school

by Sue Nolz

Seeing Lars Ulrich and James Hetfield in everything from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Time* to Regis Philbin's television show is particularly surreal when you consider the fact that

Metallica and *Armored Saint* came out of the same scene at the same time and played the same music to the same audience. Was it merely the hand of fate that created one gigantic *Metallica* machine that ate the earth like a *VoiVodian* monster while nearly all the *Armored Saints* of the world, who certainly were no less musically inclined than *Metallica*

lax, fell victim to bad labels, bad tours, bad managers and bad hairdos, leaving the door wide open for grunge and the death of true metal spirit? I guess it's a moot point now, but it is sad to think that many potentially brilliant careers were cut short simply because the calendar changed decades on us.

Sadly, *Armored Saint* was indeed a cruel

casualty of the '90s, as it released its finest album ever, *Symbol Of Salvation*, a year too late and a dollar short as Nirvana's *Nevermind* shot up the charts. Aside from business problems and the declining metal scene, the Saint also suffered a terrible loss prior to *Symbol*'s release with the death of guitarist Dave Prichard. With the gas tank

empty and heavy hearts, the band called it a day in 1992.

Vocalist John Bush fortunately was recruited by Anthrax, which breathed

vital new life into that unit, while bassist Joey Vera went on to participate in numerous projects, including landing a permanent spot in Fates Warning. Clearly, the Saints that marched out of East L.A. were survivors who refused to let a little disappointment stop them from continuing on with what they worked so long and hard to accomplish. So it was not the biggest surprise when, in 2000, the *Symbol Of Salvation* lineup got back together and recorded the stomping *Revelation*. Something quite resembling joy came bubbling to the surface upon seeing John, Joey, Gonzo, Phil and Jeff back together again, and it was remarkable to realize just how much we had missed *Armored Saint* and everything the band...and its fans...had stood for in years past.

With that flame rekindled, but an uncertain future for *Armored Saint* once again on the horizon, there is only one way to look at this point, and that is back. Back over the memories, however bittersweet they may be, of armor-clad days of innocence, of Dave Prichard alive and well, of the endless road and the fans along the way, of the "old school" that came with many hard learned lessons. As a commemoration of a career and a celebration of the time in which it took place, *Armored Saint's* 2-disc *Nod To The Old School* is meant for diehard fans and collectors, but I can't help but highly recommend it to those who weren't there when the Old School was in session. The collection is complete in every sense of the word, in that it places favorite songs alongside obscure ones,

ancient demo tracks and brand new, unreleased material, live audio tracks from the past and even two live video clips from the *Revelation* tour. Vinyl fans will get a kick out of the design of the discs themselves, which are made to look like classic Metal Blade records with the familiar cream-colored label and bloody axe logo.

Disc 1 opens with two brand new songs, "Real Swagger" and "Unstable," followed by a 2001 in-studio remake of the band's signature song, "March of the Saint." What a difference modern recording makes! While the structures and lyrics of the two former songs are decidedly more modern than the latter, "March of the Saint" doesn't seem at all out of place next to the contemporary songs given its updated production treatment. These tracks are followed by two outstanding cover versions, the first being "Day Of The Eagle," an old chestnut originally done by cult-worshipped guitar wizard Robin Trower; and a killer-as-hell take on "Never Satisfied" from the vastly underrated Judas Priest debut *Rocka Rolla*. Disc 1's highlights also include live performances of *Revelation's* tremendous "After Me, The Flood" and "Creepy Feelings," from Columbus, Ohio in 2000, and an interesting if not overly exciting acoustic rendition of "Tainted Past," the only *Symbol Of Salvation*-era track. The side closes with our time machine zooming back to 1983 and the band's very first Metal Blade recordings, engineering by Bill Metoyer. Other than the terrible drum sound that

more

Armored Saint
circa 1991,
from (l-r): Jeff
Duncan,
Gonzo, John
Bush, Joey
Vera and Phill
Sandoval.



Armored Saint

continued

plagued most early-'80s metal pressings, these ancient tracks are amazingly good and fun to hear.

Disc 2 begins on a bad note as I never liked "You Can Run But You Can't Hide" from the *Decline Of Western Civilization (Part II)* soundtrack, and it's quickly followed by "Betty '79," an utterly useless piece of filler. Fortunately, the 1989 4-track demos, recorded by Prichard, are a pleasant surprise. The late guitarist was pretty handy with the portable, and like Shroeder from the *Peanuts* gang getting concerto quality out of his toy piano, achieved a darn decent sound that captured the band with a certain feeling of live urgency and spontaneity. I particularly like the staccato-accented "Tongue & Cheek." "Get Lost" and "People" offer catchy hooks and show the band progressing into a more mature style; "Pirates" and "Medieval Nightmares," however, are definitely two steps back, warranting arrest by the cornball patrol and good for a few chuckles.

The audio portion thusly completed, let's take a look at the videos. Both are visually identical, an energetic live performance at the historic Whiskey A Go Go in LA. I still don't know who those pudgy short-haired guys on stage are, but they sure can play "March of the Saint" and "Long Before I Die" like old pros!

All kidding aside, I did feel like a cad listening to this with such complete enjoyment and realizing that I never fully appreciated this band enough in its heyday. And even as you read Joey Vera's comments on the material later on, remember that he's a musician and I'll bet a total perfectionist. I hear so much heart, soul and complete conviction in even the earliest stuff, that the simplicity of the songs is hardly a flaw. As for the lyrics, there are still plenty of South American and Italian bands penning far worse stuff today, so even that shouldn't be an issue. Whether a longtime fan or a newcomer or somewhere in between, for Pete's sake get this record. Your collection will be the better for it.

That opinion formed as quickly as two listeners, I got on the phone with Joey Vera, who

has truly become one of metal's most respected bassmen. 9:30 a.m. on a Monday wasn't the kindest time to ask him do this, but we rolled with it. And here's how it all shook out.

Metal Maniacs: I absolutely love *Nod To The Old School*. It seems like it must've been a very ambitious project to take on.

Joey Vera: It was a lot of fun actually. It was ambitious, but once we got rolling on the idea, it was really a matter of making it work into something interesting for the listeners. It's a life history that we're giving back to the fans.

MM: How did the idea for the project originate?

JV: It started out that we were supposed to do a regular EP, maybe eight songs, like

say, "OK, let's write for the next six months, and we'll record next winter, and release the record next summer." We don't have that kind of a plan.

MM: It must be kind of difficult having two core members in other very major bands, which are apparently the priority.

JV: It is, it is. Because of the way that time has unfolded for us. John is very much involved in Anthrax, and they were having some things of their own that took a few years to get through. They're at a point where they're actually getting to write new music. They've straightened out their situation with their record company, so they're back in business. John's had this cloud over his head for several years now.

MM: At least something good came out of that: it was the catalyst that allowed Armored Saint to get back together.

JV: It was a great thing in that at the time when Charlie Benante and Scott Ian [of Anthrax] got together to do the S.O.D. project, that's about when John and I got together

and started seriously talking and actually writing music. We made good use of the time. We had to do something.

MM: While you were putting the *Old School* album together, what kinds of feelings did you have about the different times and places in your life that it represents?

JV: It really took



me back. Especially the demos from 1989, with Dave Prichard. In a lot of ways it was pretty humorous. The material, that is. These demos are like sketching pads of how we got from *Raising Fear* all the way to *Symbol Of Salvation*. All those songs are just a portion of what we went through to get to that space and time. A lot of working through ideas. Most of it, I don't think is that good. A lot of the songwriting sounds really juvenile to me.

MM: But it was a process of evolution! It's something to be proud of, because it brought you to where you are today. If you didn't notice any growth by now, what would be the point?

JV: Well sure. It's not something I regret or I'm embarrassed about by any means. [Those demos] were just running steps from

some live tracks and a few bonus tracks. We realized we had a lot of bonus tracks we could put on. There were too many songs for one disc, and that brought up discussions about doing a double disc and adding some CD-ROM tracks at the end to make it even cooler.

MM: When you take a look at this album, it seems like it could be a swan song or a logical place to stop. That wasn't your intention...was it?

JV: I never really thought of it that way, but...we really are on hold right now, for an undetermined amount of time. I don't know exactly when we could get back together to do another record. We've loosely thought about it, but it isn't a normal band situation where we can sit down and

Point A to Point B. Without them we'd still be at Point A.

MM: As a musician, a bass player, do you feel you have grown tremendously over the years, and how working with Fates Warning and other projects helped you in that area?

JV: Certainly. When Armored Saint broke up in '92, I went off into this whole other area. I totally didn't associate myself or play with musicians in hard rock or metal. I went to the opposite end, doing R&B and funk in a

worldbeat band for a couple years, some very African music-meets-reggae. There was a little bit of jazz in there as well. I studied music for about two years, for the first time in my life, with a jazz guitarist friend of mine. Just some basic theory and harmony. Then I got involved with Fates Warning, and a band called Tribe After Tribe, which was another really different thing. I also played on [ex-Dream Theater keyboardist] Kevin Moore's album. All of those things combined made me a better player and a better

songwriter.

MM: So there again, you utilized the years that Armored Saint was disbanded to your total advantage. But just speaking hypothetically, do you think things might've happened differently if Dave hadn't gotten sick and passed away?

JV: I don't know. A lot of things changed, personally and everything, because of what we went through with him. But I think the band may have definitely parted anyway. We were heading down a one-way street. A

big part of it was, we really lost our vision and we got really disillusioned by the whole thing. And with the [advent] of grunge, it would've killed us anyway. We were in a place where we had enough after 10 years anyway. That wouldn't have changed.

MM: I have to admit it, but even we the listeners had about enough at that time too. But for some rea-

son now it feels extremely good to hear that music again that we always loved, the pure metal of the old school, combined with nice memories of those times. It seems like the perfect time to release this because the longtime fans are going to be ready for it.

JV: Yeah, and over the last couple of tours, we've met up with younger people who don't know about our past. Maybe the first record of ours they knew about was *Symbol Of Salvation*. So they got that and then right away the band broke up! So now they can hear what happened before that.

For some great photos and a complete history of the band, log onto armoredsaint.com. And just for the record, this writer thinks that if the aforementioned Lars and James had a clue, they would come to Joey's door a-knockin'. Then again, the world is rarely that perfect.

ARMORED SAINT Select Discography

Armored Saint, EP — 1983, Metal Blade

March Of The Saint — 1984, Chrysalis

Delirious Nomad — 1985, Chrysalis

Rising Fear — 1987, Chrysalis

Saints Will Conquer, Live — 1988, Metal Blade

Symbol Of Salvation — 1991, Metal Blade

Revelation — 2000, Metal Blade

Nod To The Old School — 2001, Metal Blade



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(Dom Lawson, Kerrang! June 16 2001)

METAL HAMMER - GERMANY:
"This album is an unbelievable high noon of a fantastic band!" (Robert Müller, Metal Hammer, Germany)

ROCK HARD - GERMANY:
"There are tons of massive Ihsahn-riffs, and a Trym drum-massacre. The album is a crossover of jazzy spheres and the brutality of the old Black Metal roots."
(Jan Jaedike, Rock Hard, Germany)



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KING'S

X



Still Manic After All These Years

by Mike G

Manic Moonlight, the ninth eccentrically original King's X album in 13 years, could be looked upon as the start of a new X era. Hereafter, whenever any critical analysis of this Houston trio of musician's musicians—guitarist/producer Ty Tabor, bassist/vocalist Doug Pinnick and drummer Jerry Gaskill—would begin, invariably talk would stray to their 1989 masterpiece *Gretchen Goes To Nebraska*. Last year, in these pages, I wrote how *Please Come Home... Mr. Bulbous* had finally equaled *Gretchen*'s amazing counterpoint of lush vocals and syncopated prog-rock adventurisms. Now the time has come to

bury *Gretchen*, not to praise her: To fully appreciate the true genius of King's X, one must traverse all nine statements as one hefty-as-hell body of work. With interweaving themes of heavy metal glory amidst deeply satisfying sidetrips into psychedelia, funk, gorgeous balladry, Beatlesque pop and even jazzy Guitar Hero-curlicue inventions (courtesy of the under-rated and often overlooked ax genius Ty Tabor), King's X has been a role model of epic consistency.

Doug Pinnick is the heart of this band. As frontman, his rather '60s-inspired hippie vibe is a warm friendly reminder that we in his audience used to be a community, sharing drugs, sharing women, sharing dreams. Of course, the communal vibe of the '60s is long dead, killed by provocateurs, rampant capitalism, the "Me-

Decade" '70s and an influx of new kids out there who never knew what it was all about in the first place. Yet somehow when Doug sings, when his Pinnick-as-Lennon public persona is at its height, when his bass pops like Larry Graham in *Sly & The Family Stone*, one is transported back to a time when the music mattered. In King's X, it still does.

Metal Maniacs: Congratulations on *Manic Moonlight*. It's simply wonderful, the best King's X album in years. Let's get right into it. In opener "Believe," you say at the fade, "Don't fight the feeling because it's alright." What do you mean?

Doug Pinnick: It's sort of autobiographical,

something I've been through. I've never had self-confidence or self-worth, even though everyone else feels I'm completely the opposite. The song is actually me finding out about that. Rather than talking to myself, I'm talking to somebody else, saying things I've said to myself. It's really helped me. When I say it's alright, it means it's okay to believe in yourself. I never thought I was alright. Most people think there's something wrong with them. They look inside themselves all the time.

MM: I feel there's going to be some know-nothing people out there again who misconstrue your meaning like in the past and think you're talking about God.

DP: No because there's nothing about God there. I'm saying believe in your own self. That's totally opposite from what Christians believe. They say don't believe in yourself. Believe in God. I'm saying to believe in yourself and not in anyone else.

MM: Ty has played some of the best guitar in his career on this record.

DP: You know why? Because he didn't give a fuck.

MM: He produced the album with a funky sense of urgency, yet a lot of the choruses are so satisfyingly full and lush. The title track is so heavy! It stops just short of feeding back completely, a kind of controlled uncontrollableness. Was this what you had in mind at the outset or did it just take shape during the recording process?

DP: It's just textures. I think when we started making the record we built and built, adding layer upon layer, whatever came out of our heads, hands, instruments and mouths. First takes only. Then we went home. We wanted the record to be natural, not worked over. I can tell you this for sure: all my vocals were on the first take. That's why we're so happy with how it came out. We purposely did not go back like on our first eight records and try to piece it all together and analyze actual sound. This time we just did it. Even lyrics. When we wrote, as soon as we'd finish music, we'd track the drum and I'd make up words during that process. When drums were finished, I'd go in and sing verses and choruses and leave. I went on the road with Poundhound after I got the bass and the vocals done. Then Ty and Jerry came back to do harmony and overdubs. I came off the road to listen to a record that I basically never heard!

MM: Had you ever worked that way before?

DP: No. We wrote in the same way, but I was always there the whole time. We didn't really think about the production this time. We wrote the songs and left them raw and basic. We wanted to produce it so as to give it some kind of a life outside of just our instruments.

MM: Among your nine records, which one did you work on the most meticulously as far as every note, every subtle nuance, and, conversely, which one came off free and clear, more organic, letting the notes and colors fall where they may, so to speak?

DP: *Gretchen Goes To Nebraska* [1989] is the one we just fuckin' spit-shined to perfection. For *Tape Head* [1998] we wanted to go back to ground zero and take the raw approach, but the record we really didn't do much for was last year's *Please Come Home*. It was produced by Jeff Buckley and we were blown away by his originality and his freedom, so much so that we just sat down and went with it. He was a big inspiration.

MM: Is *Eur Candy* [1996] your least favorite because it was your last album for major-label Atlantic?

DP: I have mixed feelings. Many people said they hated it. Others said it was their favorite King's X record. For me, personally, I love it only because that was the record I wrote most of the songs. I wanted *not* to write typical King's

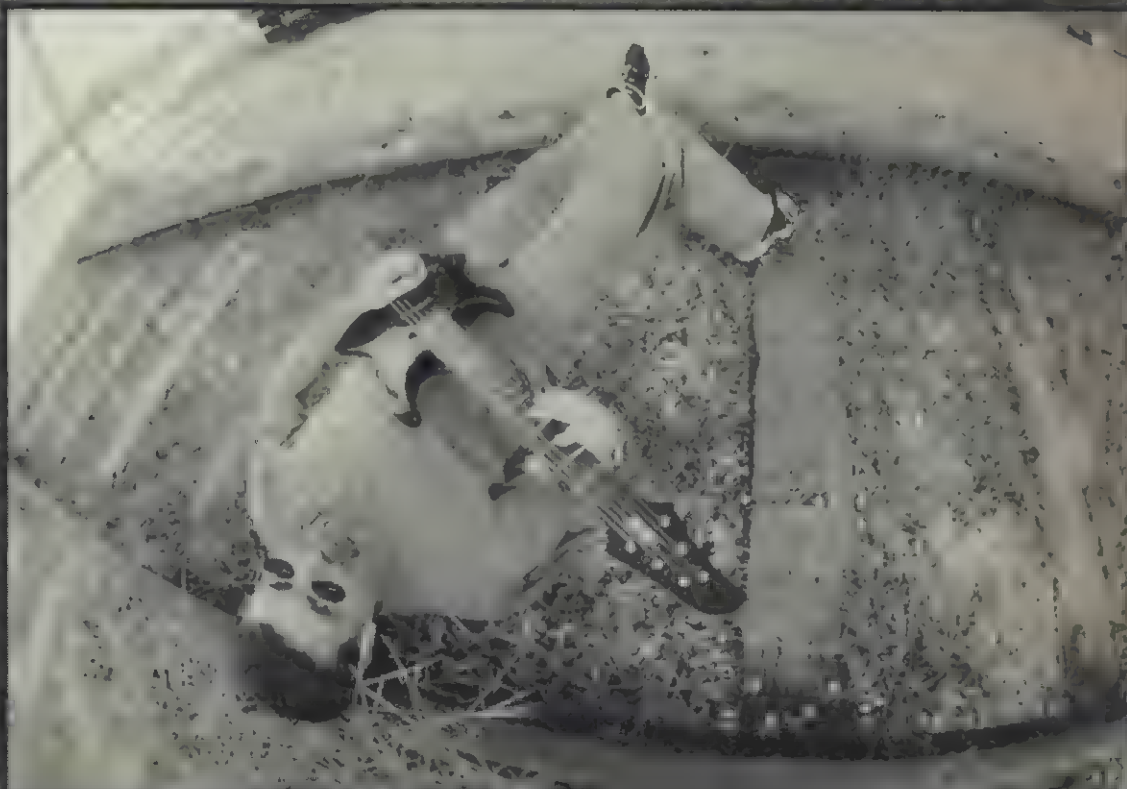
to get away from formula and branch out a little. Another thing was that I wanted all the songs to be pop-funk-metal, stuff you could maybe hear on the radio. We were trying for record sales. So I sat down and wrote what I thought were good songs, instead of writing good parts or riffs. See, that's what we try to do now. It's a song more than the licks. The first few albums we did, it was real important that we got our chops in there, and our tone, our sound, that whole thing. Nowadays, I just want to write a good song. I don't care if the guitar parts are the greatest. I just want people to sit back and say, "That was a good song."

MM: You set your own stage with the first few albums. *Out Of A Silent Planet* [1988] and *Gretchen*... were revered by musicians all across the spectrum of metal for their riffs, production and complex vocal arrangements. The "parts," as you say, were so amazing, they influenced a generation of players.

DP: This is the first record that I can actually say is different. All the rest of the records are still a and I'm used to them. Even though people say that each record is different, I can still hear the same things. With this one, though, I hear it and I know it's different. I sent a copy to my sister and she was like, "You know, it doesn't even sound like you guys."

MM: I love how you can hear the trailing wisps of feedback on the title track almost as if they were leaking out of the riffs.

DP: That chorus is my favorite chorus I've ever written. "Let's pretend it's tomorrow and we ber-



MM: In "Vigilante," you say, "I would give

DP: He thinks he did nothing guitarwise, the least he's done in a long time. He even said, "Let me just produce and the guitar will take care of

DP: And you're certainly doing it well.

Out Of A Silent Planet – 1988, Megaforce
Gratchen Goes To Nebraska – 1989,
 Megaforce
Faith Hope Love – 1990, Megaforce
King's X – 1992, Megaforce
Dogman – 1994, Atlantic
Ear Candy – 1996, Atlantic
Tape Head – 1998, Metal Blade
Please Come Home... Mr. Bulbous – 2000,
 Metal Blade
Manic Moonlight – 2001, Metal Blade

The Key To Self-Hatred



PIG DESTROYER

by Liz Ciavarella

"Bring a raincoat. It's like Gallagher only with pig intestines and virginal blood and semen. It's a big fucking mess," proudly quipped guitarist/grind titan Scott Hull of Virginia's Pig Destroyer. "I hope no one is afraid of Hepatitis B. Everyone's getting poked with a piercing needle. There might be some music in there too."

Spawned in 1997, Pig Destroyer spews forth a distinct brand of vomit-coused grindcore. Both thought-provoking and confrontational, members Scott Hull, vocalist JR Hayes and drummer Brian Harvey jointly brew sounds that transcend far beyond the conventions of a genre whose tendency to breed clones is all too familiar. Drawing blood from their collective affairs with Agoraphobic Nosebleed, Anal Cunt, Treblinka, Enemy Soil and Japanese Torture Comedy Hour (among others), Pig Destroyer is a grindcore enigma injecting poetic

odes of self-hate, anguish and sorrow into its rapid-firing, pummeling blast of fuel-fueled breakdown and muscle spasms. Having released one demo, a slew of 7" singles, full-length and one compilation, their latest, *Prowler In The Yard*, is a govt-friendly treasure chest of untapped emotion. Where comp 38 Counts Of Battery is their essential how-to of grindcrust, elucidating their punk-rooted, battering abilities, *Prowler In The Yard* is its schizophrenic cousin. Still scorchingly fast, dominating and wholly brain-draining, PD caught up feeling like phlegm. This disc temperamentally fluctuates between classic grind to thrashy-chugging to sound samples and high-pitched shrieks that make your eardrums momentarily hemorrhage. The unsettling spoken word intro and outro (courtesy of some automated being) crowns the disc with its consistent aura of looming psychosis.

The interview about to follow is manic, much like the subjects, and was done in two parts. The first begins with Hull as he walks us through the sound, art and evolution of the record. The second part is with

Hayes, the writer, the thinker, the introvert behind the words that make Pig Destroyer so goddamn disturbing. A longer intro seems needless. Read on, back in the misery, wallow in self-hurt. Bleed.

Metal Maniacs: 38 Counts was a Pig Destroyer compilation of demo and 7" cuts but *Prowler In The Yard* is the first full-length release from the band since *Explosions In Ward 6* and your first for Relapse. Were these songs written all at once specifically for this record?

Scott Hull: It was a deliberately contrived CD-length at least 30 minute release that we agonized over going through the whole Euroche vs. Relapse thing [both labels courted the band simultaneously—Liz]. Thirty minutes is an awfully long time. We don't have that kind of attention span. We don't write, practice and hop into the studio. It's too much pressure, too uncomfortable and the material gets so fuckin' old when you play the shit over and over again. The songs start to get stale. We prefer to work

(more)

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PIG DESTROYER

continued

on one song at a time, with our own equipment, so it's not like we're costing anyone any money. We have our own studio. Brian and I work well together banging material out, no one else. JR steps in after the fact and we piece all the lyrics together. He never even hears the songs until vocal time.

We started out as a grindcore band. The whole point was to get as fast a song out in as short a time as possible. That was the mentality of what you hear on *38 Counts*. This one was different. The songs are actually discernable. I love records when you can't tell what the hell's going on. My first record was *Enslavement To Obliteration* [Napalm Death]. When I heard that, I couldn't differentiate anything. Sometimes I still have trouble. Your parents listen and think it's all noise, but you understand it as a completely different thing. Carcass and Napalm Death were a total joke until I thought they were the best thing ever. All it took was a couple of listens. Then it became a legitimate genuine fascination. That's the way we approached most of the songwriting on *38 Counts*, basically taking all the darts in our hand and throwing them all at once. Now, more people are zeroing in on the riffs and that definitely comes from growing up on a steady diet of Slayer, Vio-Lence, Voivod and The Accused.

MM: It's got the punk thing going on for sure.

SH: Another huge influence is the Melvins.

MM: A lot of people can't get into them. They think it's too weird.

SH: Especially the newer stuff — total studio weirdness. That's the stuff that I kind of fall away from but the older stuff where it's just straight rock with these weird arrangements, that's like from the gods. That stuff is fucking incredible. Our songs aren't typical song-structures at all.

MM: It's sort of a pot of moods. The earlier tunes were constant grind beatdowns. Totally angry, totally relentless. There're more atmosphere here — more emotion — though none of the aggression has been lost.

SH: Totally. I'm glad you said that because I was wondering if people would get that sense.

MM: Were there circumstances surrounding the recording that maybe affected that whole vibe?

SH: Brian and I are real level headed and I wish I could say that I was tortured or in some severe anguish. Brian was but was hanging out with his girlfriend drinking. He's a total happy metalhead. Me? I just do my thing. I got my DVDs, my girlfriend and my occasional beer. JR, though, is like a black pit of self-hate. I don't know what happened. It probably had something to do with his parents. I

think he was going through a lot of shit during the time he was writing a lot of these lyrics. We contributed nothing to this lyrically.

MM: Who's the *Prowler In The Yard*?

SH: Me. When I was in Japanese Torture Comedy Hour I had a CD for Relapse that never got released

writing it. He just lets the shit flow. He's got some issues, that guy.

MM: There's some issues going on in the cover art too.

SH: French philosopher/writer George Bataille came up with this idea where you try to get yourself to an object state through physical mutilation or complete humiliation. If you get yourself to such a state, you basically purify your soul. There's nothing left but raw soul. It's what Buddhist priests do. They immolate themselves. It's a liberation of the soul. Early on, as a kid, I identified with that when I saw Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. The main character has that



called *Voltage Monster*. For whatever reason Pig Destroyer has totally cannibalized material off that CD. "Prowler In The Yard" was a song title off that CD and we've stolen numerous audio samples from it. That CD is like our bone yard. I thought *Prowler In The Yard* was just a great title. I threw it to JR and he was like, "Yeah Cool." We rarely agree on things so it was a great thing.

MM: You rarely agree?

SH: Yeah. He's very picky about stuff and I'm not as picky so my contributions aren't always what he's thinking. We tend to [clash a lot].

MM: Did that have anything to do with things taking seven months to complete?

SH: No. It just took forever for Brian and I to get the music the way we wanted, and to get JR to do the vocals. We had to suspend recording for him to quit smoking and drugging. He'd fall apart every session. Finally, he got on this cardiovascular health routine and got better in three weeks.

MM: JR writes short little insanity poems bringing the band to an entirely different level of grind.

SH: He's exorcising shit from himself. None of that stuff makes any real linear sense to him when he's

complete meltdown and destroys the hotel room and everything in it. Then he tries to re-piece everything together in these weird patterns. He basically deconstructs then puts himself back together, psychologically through this whole physical process. So I thought, "Wow. What if you did that to your body." So the original idea I had for [artist/tattooist] Paul Booth was a guy just completely taking himself apart, taking sheets of skin off, hanging it up in a nice orderly fashion on hooks and hangers, taking pieces of his body off. He somehow liberates himself that way.

MM: How did you get Paul Booth? I heard he's got a waiting list three years long.

SH: I had always wanted to get Paul Booth to do a tattoo. Fat chance. I was just doing research. I got the tattoo bug again after a few years and I found his stuff and it was just fucking incredible. I didn't realize that it was the Paul Booth. I just thought it was an artist who did these incredible pictures with such precision and detail. I was like, "I gotta work with this guy." I figured I could get in line for a tattoo but then I thought maybe I could get him to do

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PIG DESTROYER

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the cover of the Agoraphobic Nosebleed CD. A few years elapsed and I had been talking to him every now and then. When it came time for Pig Destroyer he said he was down to do it because he really liked the band.

MM: Is it a painting?

SH: No. It's a composite of different photographs. The ironic thing is that the model is [the friend] Bobby Steele [original]. Then he gave me my tattoo [a bit of a woman from hip to knee].

MM: Pig Destroyer wasn't always Pig Destroyer.

SH: The original name was Cop Destroyer. It was complete punk. That's what I wanted but JR thought that every band name I came up with was ridiculous. He's not into gore and I wanted something completely in-your-face but not tasteless or stupid.

NM: When I see the name Pig Destroyer, I think pork. I hate pork.

SH: Yeah. Most people do [laughs]. When we started out, most people understood us as Cop Destroyer. I don't really think we've changed our aesthetic. The songs are less political. People think pork, which is strange.

MM: Was it
have a bass in

[illegible]

Part II: An Hour In The Mind Of JR Hayes

MM: Seems like this was a pretty heavy record for you lyric-wise.

JR Hayes: When I started writing, I was going



through a different set of circumstances than I was during the stuff we did for the last record. My attitude had changed. All the songs, even though they might be *about* different things, on one level or another share a similarity. They all come out of my brain. I don't write about anything that's outside of myself. If there's a common theme running through it, it's probably me. The more I read the lyrics to this record, the more I realize that it's sort of a fixation

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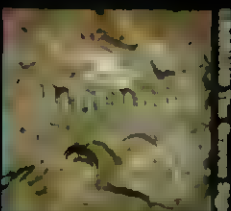


DEAR JACKSON



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on just different types of obsessions—obsessions with another person, self-image, death, religion, sex—all the things I think about on a day-to-day basis.

MM: You have sort of a non-traditional way of creating your lyrics. All of the music was written before you started to write anything.

JRH: Pretty much. I didn't really sit down to do the lyrics until almost half the music was done. I heard what Scott and Brian were doing and it was some really intense stuff and I was like, "Okay, I'm gonna have to sit down and really write the most out-of-control lyrics ever." So then I put myself on this suicide mission to make these lyrics and it just wasn't happening. It was only when I backed off and was like, "Okay, whatever comes out comes out. If I end up writing about my dog Spot, then that's just the way it will have to be."

MM: There's no dogs in these lyrics. They strike me as mini horror flicks. Like a filmstrip.

JRH: I don't write with a certain song in mind. I know what songs I have to deal with and I know approximately how long certain lyrics might have to be but basically I just try to disassociate myself from the music and just write. Once all the writing is done I get together with Scott and throw them on the songs. Sometimes it works better than others. I guess from a musician standpoint it's not the best way to do it. Scott is always trying to get me to lis-

ten to the song and get me to think about measures and try to actually *craft* the lyrics so it really fits into the song. I'm not a musician, not even close. I could never really grasp those types of concepts so I just sort of rely on him to troubleshoot it at the back end.

MM: You have a literary nature that sort of takes Pig Destroyer one step deeper. Most grind-oriented bands aren't nearly as thought-provoking lyrically.

JRH: There are a lot of authors and poets who really influence me. I'm a real fan of Dennis Cooper and Oscar Wilde. Most of my musical influences don't even come from metal, which is why I can't really write metal lyrics even if I try. I don't sit around and listen to Cannibal Corpse all day. I'm listening to The Flaming Lips and Nick Cave and stuff like that. I like to think I listen to fairly literate music. I'm a real fan of lyrics. I don't want to blacklist an entire genre but most death metal lyrics don't do it for me. I mean, Acid Bath rules. Their singer Dax Riggs is amazing. That's the only *metal* influence creeping into my lyrics. The worst thing you can do is try to emulate what you love. I try to keep it honest and do what I'm doing. There's a couple of songs on the record where I was trying to go for a specific style that I like and of course I didn't get there [laughs] but most of the time I just try to do my own thing. That's the best thing you can do with your inspiration.

MM: Who's Jennifer?

JRH: There were two stories circulating in my brain for a little while. Scott had the idea for the computer voice. He wanted some text. I wanted to put a story on the inside [cover]. Most of the time when I'm burying a record, I feel like I'm getting ripped off. You can tell when a band expends 110% of their energy on their music but when it comes to the cover, they just go, "whatever." I think *all* those components—artwork, lyrics, samples—adds to the listening experience. I wanted to make sure this record had as much texture as possible.

MM: You're rarely literal with your words. In fact, just about everything is shrouded in images and metaphors. Things are vague yet incredibly vivid image-wise, like one of those mystery paperbacks where you get to pick the ending.

JRH: I like lots of images and colors. If I wrote lyrics like, "My girlfriend broke up with me/I'm stuck in the fetal position in my room bawling my eyes out," there's nothing interesting about that. The problem with emotions in *real* life is that, though they can be incredibly powerful, they can also be really mundane when you try to describe them. That's the beauty of poetry. I wanted to try to take these things that I was obsessing over, that were bothering me and try to make them beautiful. [19th Century French Poet] Charles Baudelaire took dark disgusting subject matter and articulated it in a

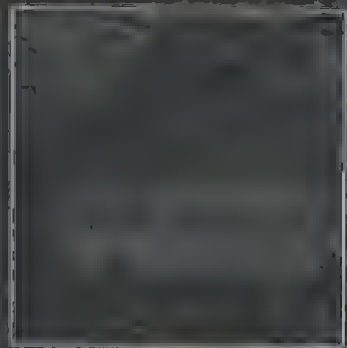
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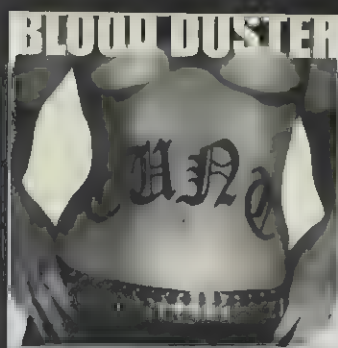


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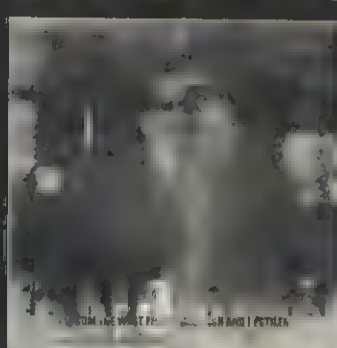
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Monstrosity *Enslaving The Masses* Conquest

While I think it was a great idea for Floridian death metal act Monstrosity to release a double-disc for their fans, one disc consisting of remixed versions of past and rare material, the other a live recording of the band, it seems kind of pointless to shell out money for it. I mean, if you're a fan, you most likely own *Imperial Doom* and might even have a few demos on tape. But then again, you might not. Another thing that puzzles me is the fact that all the material on the first disc features their old singer George "Corpsgrinder" Fisher (now with Cannibal Corpse). While it is pretty cool to hear



older, raw numbers like "Immense Malignancy" and "The Burden Of Evil" from the *Horror Infinity* demo or "Stormwinds" from the *Slaves And Masters* demo remixed and done over in the studio, it would have been more interesting to hear current singer Jason Avery take the reigns

and re-record those demos with the band in the studio. They play the songs live, why not record vintage material to coincide with the live second disc?

The live recording, though, is quite impressive production-wise. Songs like "Destroying Divinity," "The Angel's Venom" and "Imperial Doom" sound intense in the live environment, with singer Jason Avery commanding the violent pit to

go crazy. Much like their music, their mix is thick and ugly, showcasing warts and all from the live scenario. While I'm at odds with Monstrosity's offering, this double-disc will no doubt please fans of the band until the next album surfaces sometime in 2002. — Adrian Bromley

Anata *Dreams of Death and Dismay* Relapse

The discrepancies between bands that are typically labeled "death metal" is tremendous, to the point of perhaps removing any musical meaning from the term. The music of Morbid Angel, Entombed, Autopsy, At the Gates, Krisiun and In Flames all have completely different sounds and completely different goals; it is primarily the presence of deep, non-pitch vocals that puts them on the same specimen tray. Whereas most death metal bands can be grouped with one of the aforementioned groups, I can't really place Anata with any of them.

While Sweden has had several groundbreaking bands over the last dozen years, the abundance of clones over the last five years made the genre-tag Swedish death metal look a lot like a toe-tag. Enter Anata. While "combing the brutality of American death with the melodicism of Swedish death" sounds about as revolutionary as putting a hamburger on a bun, Anata's aggressive side is tempered with intelligence (clever syncopation & full chords) and their melodies are not sickeningly sweet, but strange and alien. Simple, yet effective, rhythmic riffs are sewn together with lengthy, progressive melodies, yet the root of the song is never unearthed (see Gorguts). Unlike the emotive pulls and shakes that have often aligned many twin guitar death melodies with Southern Rock's Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers Band, Anata's sense of melody is often an even legato with a progressive slant, yet the music is direct enough that it rarely sounds technical. More importantly, when they have a strong idea worth reworking, they give it enough attention ("The Temple/Erratic" 5:05-end).

On a couple of excellent occasions, Anata arranges its two guitar lines in beautiful counterpoint ("Faith, Hope, Self-Deception" 4:21-4:36), something I wouldn't mind hearing more often in death, black or even traditional metal. The songs with more blasting are less interesting than the midpaced tunes, but the album starts and ends quite powerfully (the first two and closer are best), without much in the way of lulls. The vocals sound a bit like Karl Sander's singing in Nile, which is to say *very angry human* as opposed to *very hungry monster*. The lead guitars don't hurt either; most of the songs have solos and most of the solos have a direction. Hopefully, Anata's next release will find them exploring counterpoint further, but *Dreams of Death and Dismay* is the most cohesive and engaging album of death metal I've heard recently. — S. Craig Zahler

James Plotkin's *Atomsmasher* Hydra Head

Very few records in 2001 have totally sent my head spinning.

I'm talking fist-to-the-face, falling-over-backwards, unable-to-stand spinning, the kind of feeling you have when you just had your ass kicked.

James Plotkin's *Atomsmasher* not only kicked my ass, but thrilled and confused me. It's groundbreaking stuff that pushes all the right buttons in creating a very paranoid atmosphere. From the start of this hyper-active noise/blastbeat-ridden electronic-based monstrosity ("Caught In Your Orbit") on to other ridiculously loud'n'brash speed-driven numbers like "Thunderspit" and "Gilgamesh," Plotkin and cohorts never once really tone things down or lose the overall feel of what the band is about.

The band consists of Plotkin (bass, guitar and wave editing) with drum God Dave Witte (ex-Discordance Axis/Human Remains) and DJ Speedranch handling the ultra-weird vocal duties. As the record goes along, intense ideas take shape and Plotkin guides *Atomsmasher* into taking on some of most perverse assemblages of noise, sound effects and drum blasts in recent memory. Regardless of how banged up you are once this platter comes to a close, you can't deny that it has been well worth the ride. — Adrian Bromley

In Flames The Tokyo Showdown Nuclear Blast

Word on the street is that Nuclear Blast was a bit unenthused upon hearing *The Tokyo Showdown*, the obligatory In Flames release for this calendar year. It has been said that the true measure of a band is its live ability; I don't think it's ever been said that the true measure of a band's live ability is its live album. I can only speculate that the label's disappointments include some of my own, but *The Tokyo Showdown* weighs in as my least favorite In Flames release to date.

The majority of the album's 15-song playlist draws on *Whorale*, *Colony* and *Clayman*, the three most recent studio albums. While that is a letdown to those of us who expected tracks like "Stand Ablaze" and "December Flower," bear in mind that the band wrote everything up to and including *The Jester Race* (arguably including *Whorale* as well) before becoming a professional touring act. The set list isn't a surprise, then, coming from a band that evolved into its current lineup and work ethic and whose material has evolved accordingly.

"Swim," "Colony" and "Only For The Weak," heavy on the power chords, come together handsomely in the live setting. Conversely, the tracks more reliant on twin-guitar counterpoint ("Jotun" and "Scorn" in particular) seem to lose their potency. Where you might expect some dynamic variation, instead the bottom falls out, perhaps because of how many guitar tracks the studio versions involve. The mix favors the guitars and bass, though it's entirely too clean for a live album. The drums suffer incredibly, sounding more like toys than resonant wooden cylinders. I can't say I'm fond of the moans that Anders throws our way in "Ordinary Story," nor do I enjoy hearing him say "I want to see you jump up and down to 'Only For The Weak.'"

Sure, the cover is crappy too, though not as crappy as *Clayman's*, and the crowd participates at a volume only slightly louder than that of Priest's *Unleashed In The East* (loudest during the few bars of "Raining Blood" snuck into "Ordinary Story"). But more than this, more than the song selection, it's the production that fails *The Tokyo Showdown*. As Garm says, "Fumbling is more interesting than fucking," meaning, In Flames probably had more creative energy while they were trying to decide who was going to play what instrument than they do in their current work cycle. Unfortunately, the live album supports that hypothesis, though I'm inclined to place most of the blame on the dud mix. At least on the night I saw In Flames, they were much better than *The Tokyo Showdown*. So spend wisely. — Professor Black

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AURAL ASSAULTS

continued



Neurosis *A Sun That Never Sets* Relapse/Release

The soundtrack for the apocalypse! These San Francisco pioneers of post-apocalyptic metal (print your own cliché here) during a long prolific career, have always been unique and peerless. They've prompted their own musical categories, categories that have been repeated so often that reviews have become nauseatingly predictable, something, thankfully, that the band's music has yet to become.

Although Neurosis has always been critically acclaimed, most critics fail

to grasp the band's importance and its genius. Few critics have acknowledged that Neurosis has taken the standard guitar, bass, drums and vocals set-up and created a new form of orchestral music. And because I am reviewing the band's latest record, *A Sun That Never Sets*, I am not taking into account the innovations it has made with its unique live performance marriage of music and visuals.

From the twisted, uplifting, Leonard Cohen-meets-Pink Floyd approach of "The Tide" to the mesmeric epic "Stones From The Sky," Neurosis continues its assault on the senses with what is arguably its most accessible record to date. Although clean vocals have been added to the band's sizeable war chest, Neurosis has not sold out in a brash attempt to cash in on the reputation it has spent its career building. Besides being the next plausible step in its evolution, *A Sun That Never Sets* is one of the best albums of 2001. — Vincent Cecolini

Maharajah *Repetition* Now Or Never

This team of Canucks is one of three explosive bands to enter the recently launched halls of New Jersey-based Now or Never Records. These five nomads' quest mashes all forms of existence to dust, leaving only barren wastelands where there was once life. They're known for their glorious disregard of their own safety, chipping teeth and leaving themselves a tad bloodier than other acts from the rage-filled momentum they bring to the stage. With a barbed wire club of trad-thrash riffs, stinging, hardcore-influenced vocals and a grind-like metal shield, these warriors wield heavy, doom-flavored, ax pokes in between very dissonant clunky rhythms. Their atypical D.I.Y. approach puts them one notch above experimental metalcore, but one tear below pure speed/doom metal. And while the lyrics of destruction and decay are a little too primitive at times, the intensity and fine production is intact. The album is filled with complex technical arrangements that make this record a collector's item for both its thrash-ability and envisioned chordwork. "A Portrait Of Death And Decay" is a speedy trad-metal mindfuck into off-timed breakdowns and attacking guitar solos that give no prior rhythmic warning before plugging their dingy genitals right on your face. "An Insect" is a creature that melds low melodic acoustic guitar solos with a soothing percussive feel before they open up the mushroom clouds, bringing forth the scolding thrash rain of "The Devourment Of Intellect." Take one to the groin for "The Dust Settles On Our Bones," "Machines" and "Even They Have Ghosts." What makes Maharajah so appealing is their ability to mix the harmonious and beautiful aspects of traditional metal stylings with the rough unpolished characteristics of doom and streetcore. This is one impressive record indeed. — Ron Strauss

Chimaira *Pass Out Of Existence* Roadrunner

This Cleveland start-up is one of the true sleeper bands in the entire Roadrunner catalog. It seems as though the label decided to sign a band that (thank God) sounds nothing like any of the other titles. There's no pseudo-Sepultura crap going on here or punks who sound like Coal Chamber, Machine Head or Type O Negative. These six got the juice that transcends most of the cross-breed metal out today. Together, they form a twisted beast with a pummeling rock, hardcore and power-metal blend that outshines most hard-edged releases

this year. Right from the brutal intro of "Let Go," where drummer Andois Herrick lays down the thumping lightning that buffers the dual guitars of Jason Hager and Rob Arnold, you're blasted from all sides by their rhythmic intensity. Choked full of organic rhythm shifts that run the

gambit of lo-fi to the volcanic, they push more action into every lick than a NYC crack whore looking for the next fix. The urban guerrilla style of vocalist Mark Hunter is eerily similar to bottomless pitch of Tim Williams of hardcore-era V.O.D. Atmospheric samples from Chris Spicuzza buffer the melodic pacing of "Abeo" with ethereal lyric interludes and thrashy bass pokes from Jim LaMarca. "SP LIT" follows a West Coast paradigm with funky metal keys (think Deftones) before blasting into the marching death riffs of "Painting The White To Grey." The track is another journey through harmonic valleys and high-pitched peaks. Other tracks to check out are "Rizzo," "Sphere," "Forced Life" and "Jade." — Ron Strauss



continued from page 56

Pig Destroyer Prowler in the Yard Relapse

One peek into Paul Booth's frighteningly well-done artwork for Pig Destroyer's *Prowler in the Yard* and you know (or at least hope) you're aboard for a dizzyingly demented ride. If you are or all familiar with the Virginia trio's brand of unhinged grinding suffocation, this hope becomes expectation. And though this offering isn't quite as *seriously* abrasive as their early work, PD steps forward, reaches out and grapples with that force inside that prevented you from peering into the basement of that house that *nobody* dared approach. You need to explore the disconcerting sometimes.

My first listen to this record found me throwing all sorts of ridiculous (but certainly not shameful) metal shapes in my car — air this, air that, Joker eyebrows, everything. I was initially impressed by the adrenaline inducing mechanics of the songs. But beyond the surface of the remarkable power within Scott Hull's six-string exorcisms and Brian Harvey's percussive murder lies a fertile compost littered with perverse nightmares, soiled dreams and a spiked fuckin' bat. This oppressive negative energy comes by way of all three members, but finds a voice in J.R. Hayes. The vocalist has taken a true step beyond the brink of darkness which gives PD a very real edge in today's grindcore scene. I, for one, admire Hayes' cryptically painful lyricism. And thankfully, his delivery is as bewildering as ever.

That comment about the relative abrasiveness of the record is not to imply that *Prowler...* is easily digested. PD is consistently rooted in fuck-you mode, as unpredictable as a fasting grizzly bear, relenting only to creep you out with bizarre atmospherics and their wonderfully demented narrative backends. "Trojan Whore" is as catchy as the songs get. Other highlights include, though are not limited to, "Strangled with a Hala" and "Scatology Homework," the latter of which can be best described as a fights-out knife fight.

Ultimately, this *Prowler...* not only stalks with a twisted, toxic genius but follows through, killing with unabashed malevolence. 22 tracks, 37 minutes. Grindloids, get at it. — Wade Gosselin

Hypocrisy 10 Years Of Chaos And Confusion Nuclear Blast

To fully understand the creativity behind Hypocrisy's sound, you need to look back at their inception in 1992 and see how the band began with their standard death metal offering of *Penetralia*. From there you need to systematically comb through each and every release thereafter, tracing subtle changes (i.e. production, musicianship) and discover how the band has evolved. Then, and only then, will you be able to understand why

after so many years of plugging away at it that this band has become one of death metal's most triumphant bands. Tight, raw and well-produced (thanks to the exceptional work of singer/guitarist Peter Tägtgren in the studio), Hypocrisy has broken new ground each record and fans have loved every minute of it. Now, after 10 years, the band has decided to give something back to the fans. The new disc, *10 Years Of Chaos And Confusion*, is 14 of the best Hypocrisy songs as chosen by the fans. The band re-recorded several of the older songs, allowing them to stand up to the more current material. A definite improvement indeed for classic, early-era Hypocrisy. All I have to say is Wow! Just listen how early Hypocrisy songs like "Penetralia," "Osculum Obscenum" and "Left To Rot" elegantly mesh with such metal masterpieces as the godly "Roswell 47" (from 1996's breakthrough disc *Abducted*), "The Final Chapter" (from 1997's *The Final Chapter*) and the haunting

"Until The End" (from 1999's self-titled disc). Only a band like Hypocrisy could make a best-of so appealing. Has it been 10 years already? Man, how time flies. How about another 10 years of Hypocrisy? I'm game. — Adrian Bromley



BOOK REVIEW Mortiis Secrets Of My Kingdom Earache

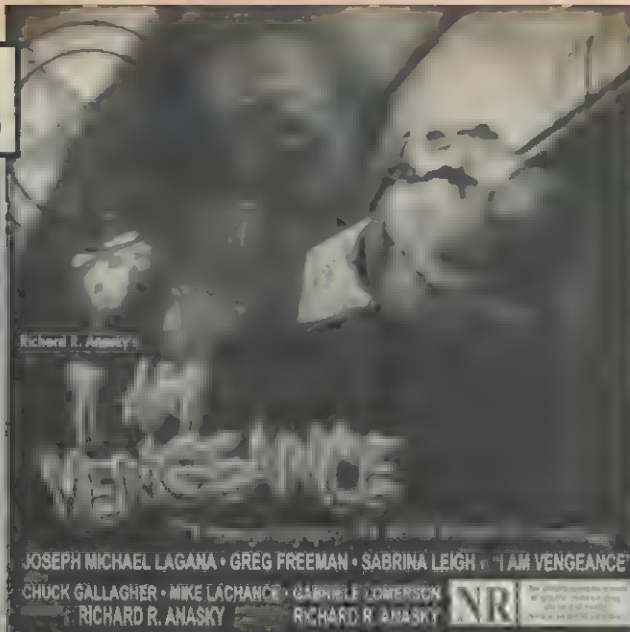
Although readers should be leery of a book whose addendum begins "I wouldn't put out the better half of this book if I wrote it today and I wouldn't call this book *Secrets Of My Kingdom*," they should be grateful that they've been prepared for the tough road that follows.

Written mostly between 1992 and 1995, when the enigmatic, troll-like character was being developed, *Secrets Of My Kingdom* is a mix of short stories, poems and drawings that takes readers on a journey through Mortii's burgeoning kingdom. Despite great drawings by Mark Riddick, Tania, Juha Vuorma, Kerry Bartlet and Conscide, the Norwegian's poor English (or it is poor translation and inept editing) will frustrate some readers, making their experience with this book feel as if they're nearing the inevitably painful end of a bull ride.

Although Mortii is no Neil Gaiman, the famed fantasy novelist and comic book writer whose *Sandman* was probably a major influence, *Secrets Of My Kingdom* provides a look behind the curtain of this gothic Wizard Of Oz. Handsomely packaged in gold-trimmed leather, this limited edition autograph tome, which comes with a gold CD-copy of his best-effort-to-date, 1999's *The Stargate*, is certain to be hotly sought after by his loyal fans. — Vincent Cecolini

Various Artists *I Am Vengeance* Meteor City

This disc is the first of two soundtrack albums for Richard Anasky's "horror" flick *I Am Vengeance*. Released before the film's completion, this collection (to be followed later by a second volume on Game Two Records) is all the evidence a metal fan needs to show that Anasky's film is the first of its kind, a movie uniting both horror and the doom metal genre. It was easy to see from the few minutes of trailers and the first couple of tracks off Meteor City's soundtrack that *I Am Vengeance* is a labor of love concocted by lovers of two of the most shunned cult corners of film and music. Whether you're talking about blood-spattered horror or dirges of plodding psychedelic heavy rock, these are two areas average folks usually ignore. Not Richard Anasky. These tones, like the flick itself, may be littered with grotesquerie, but underneath lies a theme. A theme, I might add, that's very relevant in this day and age. The age of Columbine High, as well as lawsuits blaming Ozzy, Judas Priest, Slayer and others for murder and suicide by unhinged youths. Herein you'll find 18 tracks of doom and



stoner rock, most of which is quite consistent.

Standouts? Count Raven's legacy of doom is continued by Dan Fondelius' new band, Doomsday Government, with "I Am Vengeance" and "Decision." Japan's Eternal Elysium gives a slow-as-a-crucifixion rendering of Witchfinder General's downer anthem "Burning A Sinner." "Lost Confidence" is from talented German doomsters Naevus (featuring drummer Mathias Straub and guitarist Oli Grosshans from Sacred Steel). Other standouts include Count Raven's classic "Scream," Sheavy's "Sea Of Tomorrow," Los Cruces' "In My Sadness" and The Quill's "Mind Drifter." (A side-note: Naevus have sadly disbanded, although guitarist/vocalist Uwe Groebel dooms onward with

Voodoo Shock.)

The folky guitar-driven Sheavy song captures the flavor requisite for low-budget horror flicks in their '70s heyday. And Count Raven main-man Fondelius adds plenty of spacey and melancholy atmospheric background music to the film and disc. Stuff that complements the trippy visuals of Anasky's mama's boy David William Hughes as he transforms from mama's boy into a drug abusing suicidal maniac.

As a rule, it's usually wise to stay away from bands with numbers in their monikers, and this rings fairly true on the *IAM* sound-

track. A few droning stoner rock outtings on *IAM* are a bit monotonous. Bangwater666's track is still a cut above the usual "nu metal" or "rap metal" that one associates with number name bands. Rainmaker888's doom borders on a Testament-style thrash attack (with background keyboard pads). Not bad.

No absolute chunkers and a wealth of doom make this first of two *IAM* soundtracks a solid slab worthy of your hard-earned cash. And if movies like *Last House On The Left*, *Phantasm*, *Blood Feast* and *Make Them Die Slowly* tickle you to death, then be sure to keep your eyes open for the video release of Richard Anasky's flick. (www.meteorcity.com) — Perry M. Grayson

Wayne Metal Church Nuclear Blast

Metal Church (the band) is Kurt Vanderhoof. Yet on-again/off-again vocalist David Wayne appears to be at least legally entitled to use the band's imagery for his solo album and to plant a final slap across the nuts by using the band's name as the album's title. This is a Halford situation, albeit on a much different scale. The part of Roy Z is played by Joe Floyd (Warrior), and the part of Sanctuary Management is played by Solara Entertainment, but the shallow songwriting and seen-better-days vocals are all the same.

Many elements of *Metal Church* sound borrowed from *Masterpeace* ("Hannibal") or *Metal Church* (the original self-titled album) but more often from Dio-era Black Sabbath, *Dehumanizer* included ("Burning At The Stake"). The production's midtempo width helps immensely, giving the guitars the illusion of heaviness in the spots where their riffing distinctly lacks it. The guitar/vocal syntax is both promising and disappointing. Writing toward the vocal is a success secret that escapes 95% of all metal bands since

1990. The Wayne team designs its material for Mr. Wayne's voice almost exclusively, meaning the guitars can and do pedal chords rather than peddle clutter (verses of "The Hammer Will Fall" and "Nightmare Part II"). The problem is that the vocal melodies aren't themselves prominent enough to justify the practice nor do the guitars play a single chord progression you haven't heard before. "DSD" is basically "Heaven And Hell" in the verse/pre-chorus tandem, there's that damn "Deaf Forever" riff in "Saos Creek Cemetary," but most of all, "The Choice" sounds like an intentional reference to "Metal Church" (the song).

Proverb: Better to steal from the rich than from the poor. Best to not be a thief.

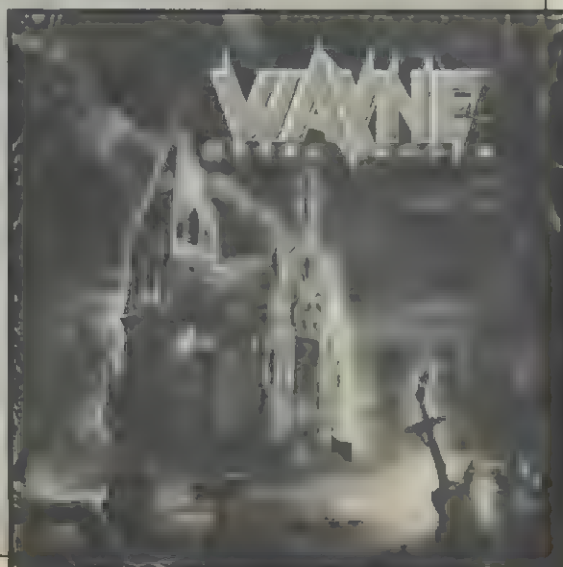
What David Wayne seems to be arguing is that he can make a better Metal Church album than Metal Church. Is that the dare? That this is better than *Masterpeace*? It isn't!

Commandment: Do not fuck with Metal Church.

So you've got one guy using his former band's name as an album title and its riffs as spare parts, while the other guy is

busy reading "I am the Metal God!" off his manager's cue cards. You tell me which is worse, because I'm not interested enough to care. I'll tell you this: Metal Church (the band) is Kurt Vanderhoof and David Wayne had nothing to do with their best album, other than probably inspiring its title.

Metal Church is more agenda than action. — Professor Black



MY DAMN COLUMN

Smokeghost (featuring Pheroze Karai of Scar Culture) set the mood with reefer-ready epics. Minus one guitarist, they were less stomp and more watery like Alice In Chains meets Acid Bath on an ecstasy trip. Evoken is sheer suicide doom: slow, thick, miserable, makes you feel like someone's dragging you by the hair through a stretch of scorching gravel, while in the crowd Vic20 singer John Murren burst into ghetto style Hamlet impressions, stabbing himself in the neck with what we guessed was a

Words and Images by: Liz Ciavarella

July and August made for quite the crazed summer of shows — so much so I hadn't a moment of downtime to even write a fortune cookie blurb much less an entire column of showgoing absurdities last issue. But plagued as I am with a head cold from the maker of evil, I've finally set aside a moment to beckon all with half a summer's worth of disorder. There's a big heaping buttload to tell and I only got four pages *with* photos (insert chattering teeth of fear) so here's my damn column on a drive-by.

New York, NY — Vic 20, Continental: Vic20 is like that bizarre cherry-flavored cough medicine you were prescribed for that bronchial infection that had you hocking up green goo. At first it didn't go down too smooth. Too thick, made you gag eyes teary but the flavor was

bangin' when it went down and goddamn did it make you feel swell. Next thing you know, you're swiggin' it, swearing to your doc how you just can't shake that damn infection, yet you're facing the world with one colossal looptafied smile. That's Vic20. Bronx style Looptafied. This crooked hatcore spit quite the intriguing concoction of old-school thrash, grass roots hardcore, cookie monster vocals and a Mike Patton brand of bizarre complete with samples, congas and bongos. Onstage they look like 4 toughguys aching to beat up someone. Live, they're louder than "fuck" (if "fuck" ever had an applied volume) creating sounds fit for a crack den. The place was bubbling with groupies, drawing hip-hop kids, metal kids (old and "nu") and down-with-whatever kids. Vic20 jizzes techno thrash death all over the place enough to make the back of your

stomach vibrate against your spleen. One overzealous fan stood in the middle of the floor in front of the stage flexing all over the place struttin' this urban-tough-guy-with-beef 'tude until he did this whack spin

thing, randomly pointing at someone then barrel-assing into them until they tried to start shit, bled or sulked off. Was a bit of a headkill. One chick got clocked in the eye so hard I swore I heard a vessel pop. Later, he cannon-balled straight down the club smashing into everyone in his path. I went to the back. (www.vic20.net)

New York, NY — Spirit Caravan/Evoken/Earthbound Smokeghost, Hard Rock Café: As a lifelong New Yorker, I'm proud to say I've never been to this too-trendy theme joint with two drinks at \$15. We'll never come here again. Looks like an MTV acoustic jam set. But the chances of me missing a Spirit Caravan show are about as likely as the Pope dying his hair black and donning gauntlets on Halloween. NY local stoner rock/sludge machine Earthbound

scissor. Rock riff warriors Spirit Caravan seeped out the speakers, into the air, into our lungs, into our spirits. They were late but we all stayed hypnotized by their bottom heavy, soul ridden riffcore. *Elusive Truth* offerings mixed with earlier tunes, each song entwined in a Wino-made solo of Sabbath inspired soul. (ESG — www.earthbound-smokeghost.com, Evoken — www.evoken.com, Spirit Caravan — www.spiritcaravan.com)

New York, NY — Clutch/Candiria, Irving Plaza: Clutch is all-universal, all empowering, fit for anyone anytime anyplace. Shirts I saw: Soulfly, Cradle Of Filth, Nashville Pussy, Static X, Tattoo The Earth, Morbid Angel, Stomach of Brooklyn (a personal favorite), Slayer, Sex Pistols. There were others. These were just the ones that stood out and

more



Spirit Caravan



Earthbound Smokeghost

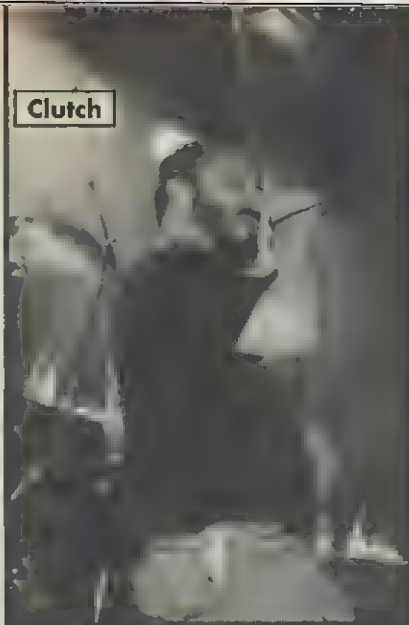
MY DAMN COLUMN

continued

while I wasn't carousing the grounds of Irving as the metal fashion police, it always makes me fuzzy to know that Clutch is indeed the everyone-band of the century. We all join hands when Clutch comes to town. Jesus on our dash boards, pipe in hand, Irving Plaza was one colossal sweatbox of bass heavy rockness complete with concentrated clouds of smoke and ritualistic dogfight pits. Earlier, Candiria bore the stamina of raging Cyclops, kicking, screaming spewing mindbending metal-jazz-hiphopcore. While the vet

ing on the fine line of antique and condemned. It's humid — an inferno actually; smells like sweat socks and open ass. I hit my head twice on the drop ceiling up the narrow stairs. It must hold 30 safely and there's 80 here. Heidnik's naturally drawn to the filth though as they shred with their exotic chomp-on-paint-chips flavor. They grind, inducing sweat, upping the stage havoc nine notches to crackhead ballistic. So fast, so furious, so raw, shameless and throat-grabblingly intense, Chin Strap broke one of his bass drums. They kept going. Singer Little Bitch looked as though the veins in his head were about to split open. There's a

Clutch



mass vomitorium loomed. I stam-peded my way up the stairs to the fresh stank Philly air. Unholy Grave, who speak little English and came all the way from Japan to play here(!), takes the cake for best set of this column. They thrashedly destroyed as if they were playing for thousands, flailing into absurd riffs and manic breaks with wondrous accuracy. Physically frantic, whatever pits could've been were. Over all too soon. (Total Fucking Destruction — <http://welcome.to/totalfuck-ingdestruction>)

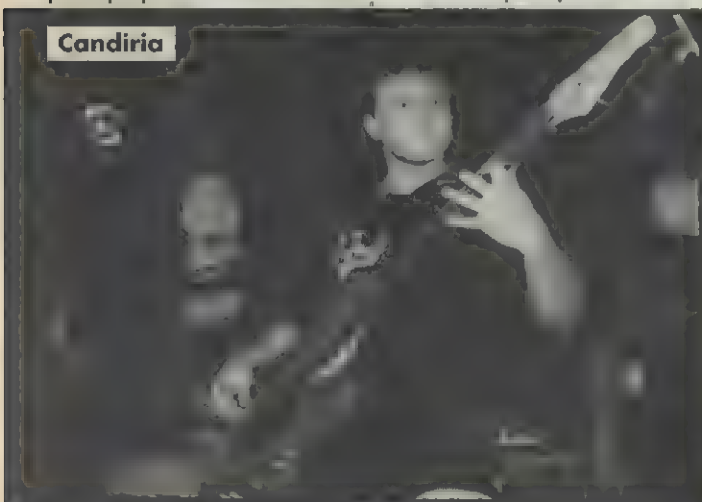
New York, NY — Raging Speedhorn, CBGBs: 5-piece

Brit sludge-metal, their second stateside show, small, intimate, unannounced, a set for A&R bizzers whose balls were shredded by the sheer volume, dual vocal action, and gutturally superb monopolization of the stage, complete with solid beat-down rhythms, semi-choreography and angst. The evening blossomed into a giant booze contest

at the luxurious Grassroots Tavern on St. Marks where the Speedhorns won triumphantly (www.ragingspeedhorn.com).

New York, NY — Catastrophic/Diecast/Sworn Enemy, Wetlands: Sworn Enemy are tougher than the five boroughs melted into one enormous gummy bear. Total NY-style toughguy thugcore to throw you into an organ grinder with a smile. Nothing real innovative musically. Just a thunderous wall of chugga chugga kill riffs and a provoking temperament. Then Diecast ruled the stage even when a fight broke out in the pit for reasons unknown. This band plays out constantly and kicks higher every time. Every riff shredded paint off the ceilings of the apartments down the block. Catastrophic battered through an hour of malevolent death metal though their reception was less than adequate, almost upsetting. Here before the eyes of everyone at Wetlands was pure sickness — but to the predominantly hardcore crowd watching, this was dull. Go figure. (Catastrophic — www.catastrophic.org, Diecast — www.bhcdiecast.com, Sworn Enemy — www.swornenemy.net)

Candiria



NYers who had seen them a dozen times in various venues drank happily at the bar, new-found Candiria fans slapped themselves silly on the dance floor. (Clutch — www.pro-rock.com, Candiria — www.candiria.com)

Philadelphia, PA — Unholy Grave/Total Fucking Destruction/Index/Heidnik, Funrama: Somewhere in a more demolished part of Philly, some kid lives in a three-story crusty old mansion throwing grind shows in the very bowels of his stinky deathtrap of a basement. Everything's broken here teeter-

chick in Index who growls her way to oblivion while her band drops bloody grindbombs and thus I love this band. Total Fucking Destruction doused the dungeon with more humidity thanks to their glorious glut of Rich Hoak grindmares and hellish speed. They relentlessly plowed through one big clusterfuck of grating brutality. There's no room for a real pit. You either get clobbered or you're not there. One guy took out the whole first row of people before busting a swan twirl towards the sink where he puked. We sink dwellers, amid the humidity and the body odor, were instantly icked. Visions of a



Colin (Diecast) and Murren (Vic20) at Wetlands

New York, NY — Bad Wizard, Club Spa: Bad Wizard is sheer redneck rock from the

continued on page 73

DORO



The new album from SINISTER, "Creative Killings" on Hammerheart Records, in stores November 6th

feat. Mike Rodden and the RUSSEL



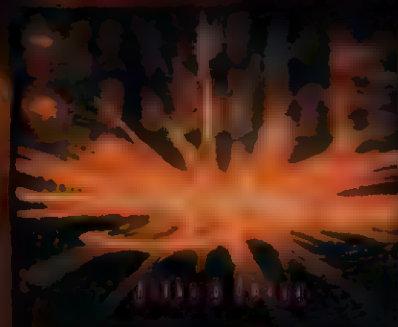
CREATIVE KILLINGS is the new album from the band SINISTER, featuring Mike Rodden and the RUSSEL. The album is available on CD and vinyl. The CD is priced at \$12.99 and the vinyl at \$19.99. The album is available in stores starting November 6th. For more information, visit www.hammerheartrecords.com.



alpha & omega PENANCE

"It's obvious that as of right now, the band has never sounded better... that shuddering doom chug and emotive vocal roar all present and correct, but the highlight here for me is "Cold," a chilling, heartfelt doomcore anthem laidback but majorly heavy, working up to an addictive rolling thrasher Sabotage. Loose and groovy it may be but it's delectable and destructive and all the right damn words too. C'mon brothers and sisters, submit yourself to Penance!"
—Oz 10 Terrorist Magazine

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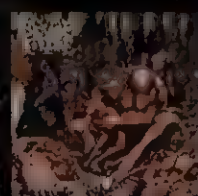
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MY DAMN COLUMN

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gutter: filthy, sleazy and classless. Their schtick stems from strutting around like sparkingly chic trailer trash. Seems odd in this trendy, made-for-beautiful-people club. The lead singer seems un-showered but happy, his beer gut hanging merrily over his pants, button down shirt wide open, big fro, barefoot, feeling himself all over as he's repulsive though somehow fascinating. Together they're the kind of band that makes you want to scratch and burp. Total high energy truckstop rock. (www.teepeere-cords.com)

Camden, NJ - Ozzfest, Tweeter Center: Rewind back to the very first Ozzfest when, on one glorious bill, Neurosis, Pantera, Machine Head (when they were still *Machine Head*), V.O.D. and Fear Factory shared

the rays, get those priceless metal tans (tan lines that start at the shirt sleeve) and consume overpriced alcohol. But like Lollapalooza for the alterna-realm and Milwaukee for the death metal/black metal cast, Ozzfest too has shot itself right down the poop shoot ever since. This year I didn't even have my proverbial metal tanning session. Instead I popped in three songs into Slipknot's set, watched ungodly amounts of people pay homage to the furiously charged masked ones and drank a curb-side margarita. I regret missing Hatebreed and Black Label Society but worse things have happened. Marilyn Manson doesn't belong in this column but I feel a need to comment. This was one hell of a stage set. Think pope costumes and stilts and lights and subliminal word visuals and giant photos of Marilyn Monroe. But somewhere along his long lonely trip towards God-Of-Fuck stardom, he's lost his shock. He's stunned the whole damn planet in one way or another. He was practically

longer scary. Sure, he's still clever and maybe with the next record he'll think of something to shock people again but self mutilation, onstage nut sucking, stilts, giant backdrops of Kiss-inspired "Drug" signs, dead babies, chicken cages, spit, piss and gospel singers? I mean, what's left really? He's an "artist" so let him go make art and write books. He is a shrewd businessman though so he doesn't completely suck. Ozzywise, no matter how old Ozzy gets, nor how difficult it gets for him to hit even the lowest notes, he's still Ozzy and Sabbath is still Sabbath. They're the godfathers. This was a stirring set. Sound actually ruled. Stage set-up was godly. If you're metal, you know the drill.

New York, NY - Slipknot Listening Party, Rivertown Lounge: Not free Red Bull & vodka

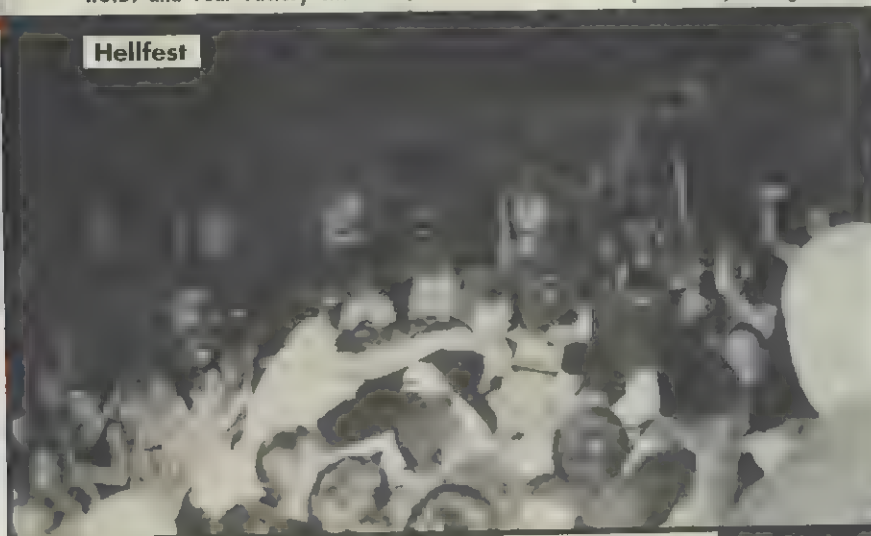
again?

Syracuse, NY - Hellfest: There's something liberating about basking in the wet of your own perspiration even when you're motionless. You feel cleansed. This strange little jamboree of thousands at a place I can't remember is predominantly hardcore where a lot of the kids hate metal. Then there's the metal kids who like hardcore, particularly the bands with the most Slayer riffs. And there's people walking around in Europe shirts. At what point did hair metal become fashionable again? I saw two *Final Countdown*-era Europe shirts, one Warrant shirt, one Poison, Ratt, Bon Jovi.....Bon Jovi? Yet I'll get my ass kicked by a bunch of straightedge ninja kids if I try to smoke pot between two parked mini vans. This place is strange. Nevertheless, I had a blast. Highlights include the kid with the giant penis getting signatures from all the bands. People scampering for

continued on page 86



This Day Forward at Hellfest



one stage under a bright blue sky. Black Sabbath killed and Ozzy didn't need to outwardly apologize to a field of thousands for his lousy vocals in a rain-storm. It wasn't exactly the U.S. answer to Dynamo, and it always had its commercial leanings, but it was what it was, a decent summertime metal outing where local metal schmos could bask in

blamed for Columbine. Hell, back in his fledgling years, he used to make more money *not* playing certain shows because the Bible-Belt masses swore he was indeed the Anti-Christ. Now he's a shockless rock icon. He's done his thing. He's no

Hellfest



ManiaCaL MAiL

Dear *Metal Maniacs*,

Just wanted to send greetings and utmost respect. I picked up *Metal Maniacs* for the first time from a neighbor and you have a better metal rag than *Metal Hammer* already! Keep up the great work! Bang your head.

Marshall Ellen
New Boston, TX

Dear *Metal Maniacs*,

Another note from a 55-year-old, sexually in question, recently converted metal head (three years now). I was first turned on to metal via an FM station in '84 then lost touch again until that fateful day in the spring of '98 when I bought an issue of *Metal Maniacs*.

In one of my past letters, I said Ihsahn [Emperor] is my favorite black metal composer and lyricist. I am a recent metal convert and have much to learn. I started at the end of metal and am progressing backwards. I did not realize that Samoth was the founder of Emperor and wish to give him his proper dues. I was re-read-

some as hell! In essence, I believe the Vikings are being resurrected after one thousand years of sleep beneath the blanket of Christianity and this time they will not be defeated.

Del North
Wichita, KS

Salute Metal Comrades!

I have a question. Why the continual fruitless and futile wars amongst you metal heads out there over which genres or metal (or non-metal) must be destroyed? We just read *Metal Maniacs* November 2001 issue and the shit still continues. You brothers and sisters need to stop that shit quick. All you're doing is giving "attention" to these groups/genres you proclaim to hate. It's like they say: "Bad publicity is better than no publicity." We all have our opinions on these different bands and styles and we don't have to like it all. I'm mostly into brutal and black metal but I also enjoy doom, '70s rock and country.

And to "Deathfreak" [November 2001], I

too am a brutal death metal fan. Skinless is killer but does black metal not, for the most part, consist of brutality? All that ridiculing of "the totally gay music they play" is fucked up. I would like to see you say that to Mr. Fause [ex-Emperor] or Mr. Varg

[Burzum]. Quit the god damn bickering — nature shall let the strong survive!

Lastly, Liz, after reading your "Damn Column" — which was kick ass — I realized something was missing: I want to know, was Morbid Angel (Uniondale, NY) awesome or what? It sucks that they jammed first but how did the crowd respond being that they were the

most ferocious of all.

Keith Rozhon (AKA R.I.P.)
Joliet, IL

Hey Keith,

Glad you dig the column. As for Morbid, like I said, thanks to ungodly amounts of traffic and the band's needlessly early set time, I didn't get to see them. I did, however, see them on the last tour with Pantera and Soulfly at the Hammerstien ballroom in NYC which is quite a gigundo venue. Not an arena but still the largest place I've seen Morbid outside of a festival. They were absolutely bludgeoning. Sounded like I was seated at the very gates of hell (the ceilings are high making everything louder than Aplu, uh, the Etruscan god of thunder and lightning of course). Most kids sort of stood with blank faces but there were indeed a troop of Morbid revelers, especially the Viking Crown/Necrophagia/Eibon fans beating the living poop out of each other in honor of their brutalic love-
liness. — Liz

Dear *Metal Maniacs*,

The card between pages 18 and 19 of the newest issue [November 2001] is correct. Every store that sells magazines in my area carries only the trendy mags. I recently found a store that sells *Metal Maniacs*. I've re-subscribed and I'm never going to let my subscription expire again. I also ordered all the back issues I've missed.

My fellow metal heads I urge for as many of you that can subscribe to please do so. Why? Because with enough subscribers this magazine can be printed monthly and that would kick ass.

Mike G, here are a couple of interview/story suggestions:

"Meet The Label President" — Brian Slagel [Metal Blade Records]

"Meet The Metal Engineer" — I suggest Bill Metoyer [Six Feet Under/Flotsam/DRI/Fate's Warning/Sacred Steel etc.] for the first article. I would like to see these articles in every issue

Lastly, let people listen to whatever genre of metal they wish. We metal heads must set aside our differences with each other because remember: "United we stand, Divided we fall."

Mike Mucci II
Bellmawr, NJ

Dear *Metal Maniacs*,

Back in the late '80s and early '90s there existed three bands who put out just a couple of



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ing the credits to *Anthems To The Welkin At Dusk* and realized that he contributed much more to the music and lyrics than I had remembered — and his instrumental masterpiece, "The Wanderer," is one of the heaviest songs I've ever heard.

My point here is that something is happening in Scandinavia — something powerful and awe-

albums before drifting into obscurity: Dead Horse, Zoetrope and Hallow's Eve. I thought they put out some damn good metal in their too-short spans. What happened to them?

Also, a comment on the reviews of *Lost Horizon* and *Andromeda* in the November 2001 issue. My general opinion of "power metal" was always that of "redundant silliness." But *Lost Horizon* and *Andromeda* (and I would add *Wizard* to the list), speaking in terms of music general, kick serious ass.

Finally, you had asked for comments in the October 2001 issue about the posters. They're cool — especially the Six Feet Under one (a fun-loving, joyful picture). But the "Visual Evidence" spreads are noticeably reduced. I personally enjoy seeing more photos of bands so I vote 50/50 posters vs. pages. *Maniacs* kicks ass!

Scott A. Stedeford
Minersville, PA

Hey Scott,

Dead Horse only released *Horsecore: An Unrelated Story...* (1990) and *Peaceful Death And Pretty Flowers* (1991), both on Relapse, before branching off into oblivion. Check out the band's official website at: <http://www.horsecore.com/> According to the news archive on the site, the members are dabbling with various projects.

Zoetrope is an enigma. They only did three records from 1985-1993 (*Amnesty* and *A Life Of Crime*, both on Combat, and *Mind Over Splatter* on Red Light). The band vanished into nothingness by '93. Former guitarist Louie Svitek was in Mindfunk, Ministry and M.O.D. No web site for these guys though.

Hallow's Eve had three Metal Blade releases from '85-'88, *Tales Of Terror*, *Death And Insanity* and *Monument*. They broke up after that and there's little documentation as to where any of the members have wound up. — Liz

Dear *Metal Maniacs*,

Greetings from the depths of Alabama. Thanks to your great magazine, I am able to stay on top and in touch with the metal world. The town that I live in is mainly country and pop music fans so you can imagine the hell I go through. The music stores just don't carry much on metal. I either have to order by mail or drive 2/12 hours to find what I'm looking for. *Maniacs* is like a breath of fresh air. I'll read it from cover to cover three or four times.

Mike G., that was a great interview you did with Slayer and Miss Sue Nolz, that was an awesome interview with the metal god himself, Rob Halford. I would have taken off the whole damn week to have drinks with Halford.

To a more serious point, I know a lot of the readers will miss Jeff Wagner. He was great at *Maniacs*, but it seems it was time to move on. The

new associate editor Liz Ciavarella is wonderful. So far everything she has written and done for *Maniacs* has been out of this world. This metal goddess is going to surpass Jeff Wagner and take this damn mag to a place where only Mike G can dream of. Sit back and enjoy the ride metal heads! Liz is part of our future and what a rockin' kick ass future it is going to be.

Shane
Somewhere in
Alabama

Shane,

Your words gave me a warm fuzzy feeling in my tummy. Thank you — but Wagner left a legacy that will never be forgotten and I can only hope to match what he's done for the metal world! Thank you again. Metal in the fridge — Liz

Dear *Metal Maniacs*,

I am a *Metal Maniac* from Utah but am currently serving as a missionary for a Mormon church here in Oklahoma. I've been an avid fan of your rag since 1994. This is my first time ever writing. I just loved the Slayer and Six Feet Under interviews in the October 2001 issue (I also loved the Slayer/Cradle Of Filth poster)! Your magazine truly rocks. What's happening with Nile? I love them!

I have been listening to metal for over 13 years now — since I was 11 years old. I love death metal as well as power metal, thrash, black metal and other types of music. I would like to give kudos to that Paul Brown dude who wrote in [October 2001]. Metal is all about kicking in the face of stereotypes and crap like that! But if you look back to the "Glory Days" of metal, sadly you will see some of the same things that went on back then. It's a bit filial in my opinion. I always enjoy the smartassness of your editorial staff.

I almost forgot, in the "Aural Assaults" section of the October 2001 issue, I read something that pissed me off and that was what Craig Zahler stated in his review of the latest Megadeth album, *The World Needs A Hero*. He stated, "Megadeth hadn't actually made something good." Are you talking about just this album or the band in general? I happen to be an insane Megadeth fan since I don't know when. Besmirching my Megadeth with a comment like



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that will get your ass punched! Love the death metal and black metal reviews. Keep it up and keep it real!

Jason Shooting Thunder
Lawton, OK

Hey Jason,

Nile completed their tour with Cradle Of Filth the end of July. They will do some headlining dates in the UK with Behemoth from November 30th to December 10th. December 11th they will start the European X-Mas 2001 Festival featuring Cannibal Corpse, Kreator, Marduk, Dark Funeral, Krisiun and Vomitoy. For more info check out the band's official (and rather swell) web site at: www.nile-catacombs.com or www.relapse.com.

Also, as an avid Megadeth supporter (a fact that's gotten me all but skinned alive and dipped in boric acid at times), I can assure you that Zahler was referring to the band's *latest* release and *not* their entire catalog. See the December 2001 issue. In Zahler's review of Mayhem's *US Legions* he actually refers to *Rust In Peace* as one of, "the five greatest heavy metal albums of all time." — Liz

Dear *Metal Maniacs*,

I have to thank Blake C. Kuehn for the "Rewind" feature on Rigor Mortis, one of the most underrated and under appreciated bands in thrash metal. However, I highly disagree with bassist Casey Orr, who seems to think that the band's self-titled debut is the only one worth listening to. In my opinion, post Bruce Corbitt Rigor Mortis had plenty to be proud of. *Rigor Mortis vs. The Earth* is one of the best thrash albums I have ever heard, while *Freaks* had its moments (the title track and "Cattle

more

ManiaCaL MAiL

continued

Mutilation"). If Casey is trying to get the first album reissued, why not all three?

I'm getting really sick of going into record stores to pick up a CD of an old school death/thrash/speed metal band, only to find that their entire catalogue is out of print. What is this shit? Besides Rigor Mortis, here is a humble list of bands whose albums need to be reissued. Hope you enjoy:

Violence: An excellent Bay Area thrash band with no melodies, no ballads and some really bizarre vocals courtesy of Sean Killian. Songs like "World In A World," the ridiculously offensive "Gutter Slut," "Eternal Nightmare" and "Officer Nice" are staples of enraged thrash. This band is essential listening for anyone who ignores the posted speed limit while driving, anyone who can vomit on command and anyone else. A must have.

Nocturnus: I had hoped that this band's reformation and subsequent album (*Ethereal Tomb*) would eventually lead to a reissue of its first two (*The Key* and *Thresholds*). The fact that this hasn't boggled the mind. Nocturnus seem to have had quite an influence on many of today's

bands (listen to Cradle Of Filth if you doubt this), so it's almost criminal that their old stuff remains deleted.

Forced Enemy: Technical thrash from Seattle, featuring the inhuman guitar playing of some guy named Brad Hull. These guys were great. Sudden tempo/time signatures were "pissed off" enough to possibly appeal to Pantera fans. Albums like *As Above So Below* would make great background music for a really violent video game while "Bone Crackin' Fear" is, in my opinion, the most ferocious and intense song ever written by any metal band.

Ripping Corpse: A completely ignored, yet brutal metal band whose ranks featured Erik Rutan [Morbid Angel/Hate Eternal]. Their lone record, *Dreaming With The Dead*, features enough weird riffs to make Scissorfight proud while Scott Ruth's hardcoreesque snarl left most of the lyrics intelligible (a rarity in death metal). Essential for anyone who is sick of all this one-dimensional "brutal death" bullshit. Best if listened to while enjoying herballly enhanced brownies.

Defiance: Sure, they were Testament clones and maybe Steev Esquivel's vocals on *Void Terra Firma* were a bit weak but that doesn't mean those guys were lame. The harmonized guitar lead that kicks off "The Killing Floor," the kick ass, riff fest of "Terra Firma" and the flawlessly written "Inside Looking Out" and "Perfect Nothing" are examples of why this band needs to be heard. Every thrash fan should own *Beyond Recognition* while *Product Of Society* and *Void Terra Firma* are great records as well.

A few years ago I sent a guy forty dollars for a copy of *The Key* by Nocturnus on CD. I waited and waited. When it finally showed up and it turned out to be a scratched,

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Hey Mike and Metal Maniacs, My son may love his dad's 'zine best but he loves *Maniacs* too! He even made his metal facel Thanks for reviewing my mag over and over. - Jeff Rappaport/*Metal Rules! Magazine*, www.metalrules-magazine.com

skipping clusterfuck. So maybe you can understand why I'm passionate about this issue. I've been dying to check out bands like Wargasm, Pestilence and Nasty Savage but can't find their stuff either. If there is such an interest in old, obscure metal, where are all the albums? Judging from your "Shorts" section, there seems to be quite a demand for at least some of the bands I've listened, among several others. I'm just tired of "listening" to worn-out dubbed copies taped over a decade ago. These bands and their fans deserve better. Thanks for your time.

Bryan
Maine

Metal Maniacs,

I'm a 41-year-old metal fan. The interview with Slayer was great however they all sold out big time. The new CD is punk metal? I hate punk. Their punk cover CD, *Undisputed Attitude*, did not sell well. Why do a heavy, punk metal CD? The last CD was okay. I'll buy it anyway because I'm a fan. I will buy all their CDs but get a clue. Metal is heavy and fast and making a comeback. Punk is dead. On Six Feet Under, they are now the best USA death metal band. A lot of writers put them down. They rule. *Metal Maniacs* is #1

Andres Duran
Los Angeles, CA



CADAVER, INC.



JAG PANZER

by S. Craig Zahler

One of the main reasons I write for this magazine (and wrote/edited a fanzine of my own for a little while) is to encourage people to buy what I consider good metal, and try to

prevent people from buying the candy trifles that would ultimately leave them with \$17 cavities. While I think there are nearly two dozen extreme metal bands out there making new and interesting music, the traditional/power metal genre has few bands that can even pick up the axe, much less swing it. I couldn't understand the

Hammerfall thing (ladies and gentlemen, Don Dokken's daughter = Joacim Cans) and Metal Blade has seemingly signed any band that's ever sniffed a dragon's piss. Where are the individual bands with unique sounds? Where are the Diamondheads, Angel Witches, Iron Maidens, Judas Priests, Dios and Savatages of the '90s? Sure most of these bands still

exist—or reform weekly—but they aren't hungry the way they once were and their product tingles the olfactory sense with a somewhat stale aroma. Jag Panzer, old-schoolers from the '80s, created what I consider to be the best traditional power metal album of the '90s with *Age Of Mastery*, followed not too distantly by their *Forth Judgement* LP. Great riffs, rousing choruses, shredding-yet-song-sensitive leads, boulder cracking drumming and a nice amount of song variety.

While Gorman speedsters Blind Guardian, Gamma Ray, Iron Savior and Helloween fly along at uniformly quick double-time tempi, Jag Panzer knowingly demonstrates that there is much more strength in not flexing all of your muscles all of the time. Panzer flexes the right ones. With their newest release, *Mechanized Warfare*, Jag Panzer shows that they are power metal craftsmen of the highest order. The first four songs on this new LP quite easily topple the best tunes on recent

Panzer To The Throne



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JAG PANZER

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albums by better selling bands like Iron Maiden, Lead Earth, Hammerfall, Iron Savior, Stratovarius and Primal Fear in all of the following categories: syncopation, energy, weight, climax, inventiveness and hooks. Songs dwell in delicious twin guitar harmonies that *In Flames* should envy ("Unworthy," "The Silent" and "Choir Of Tears") and battlehall choruses with truly good hooks at their core ("Take To The Sky" and "Power Surge"). The tricky rhythms and swashbuckling vocals that have always enlivened Panzer's sound have never sounded better or more inspired than now. Like a good majority of Manowar's catalogue, you will find yourself singing many of Jag Panzer's tunes much to your parents', wife's or cellmates' dismay. It will most likely be the best traditional metal album of the year.

I sat down with guitarists Mark Briody and Chris Brockerick, vocalist Harry Conklin, bassist John Telley and drummer Rikard Stjernquist after Jag Panzer's enjoyable (albeit brief) set at Milwaukee Metalfest.

Metal Maniacs: Does Century Media fly you out to do gigs like this?

Mark Briody: Yeah, the money you make for a gig like this obviously doesn't cover the

expenses coming out, so we hit up Century Media for tour support. We try to do as many of these festival gigs as we can.

MM: I imagine it's pretty frustrating. By the time you have the acoustics figured out, you're off of the stage.

Chris Brockerick: We're very used to that.

MB: We did Wacken last Saturday and Switzerland the day before...it's the same kind of thing. Five minutes to get set up.

Rikard Stjernquist: At Wacken we played for 50 minutes, performing two songs off each release, whereas tonight we played one! We've been doing these kinds of festivals quite a bit, where you have to get set up real quick. As the drummer, it's a pain in the ass 'cause I don't know what [sort of drumkit] I'm going to get. The kit tonight was a piece of shit. It makes you a better performer. You learn to perform in any situation, no matter what happens and you gotta be able to pull it off reasonably well.

MM: Do you play a lot in Colorado?

CB: No. We played one show last May because Keith from Silencer arranged it.

MM: Silencer? They played yesterday! They were one of two bands that everyone thought was pretty good. I'd never heard of them!

MB: They're shopping [for a label deal]. They've got a great [independent] CD out.

RS: The show we did with them was packed.

MM: They were tight. The singer hit his pitches. They were totally on. You guys played many first tracks in concert this evening

["Black," "Iron Eagle" and "Take To The Sky"]. Do you feel that the first track on an album should be your best foot forward?

MB: I think we pick an opening track that is basically indicative of what you're going to get on the whole release. We would never put the fastest or slowest song as the opening track, but we try to pick opening tracks that set the mood of the release. We felt that "Take To The Sky" did that on *Mechanized Warfare*. You definitely don't want to blow your wad on song one, but you need a really strong song that's got a good hook.

MM: How do you go about crafting a guitar solo?

CB: I hope it comes naturally, but it can be a number of different ways. When the music starts with stops, I hear a very fast diminished run in-between. As the solo progresses and opens up towards the end, I hear much more of a melody. I come out with a ton of notes at the beginning which isn't always appropriate for the end of a solo.

MM: A lot of Randy Rhoads solos would have fast runs and then dog-eared portions. How has the experience been recording and writing the new album?

Harry Conklin: It's always strange for me, because I get completed works of music. I put a story for what the emotional content of the music drives me to. I used to have a bunch of titles that I'd come up with, but now I just close my eyes and get the emotional content of the song. [I use] pretty much the first idea



that comes to me, whether it's rage or something pretty or something ugly. It's never preconceived, unless it's a story like Macbeth (as on *Thane To The Throne*). All the best vocalists in the past—whether they're metal or not—will always have a very smooth melody over a very syncopated guitar part. The more complicated the music is, the more smooth and legato the vocals need to be. Vice-versa, if there is a very open chord and there is not very much motion in the music behind it, there is much more room for the vocal melody to be syncopated and offbeat.

MM: I think the chorus for "Take To The Sky" is great.

HC: I think that's the smoothest chorus I've ever come up with. The whole thing is almost one note.

MM: Yeah, until you get to that last round. It's nice that, in concert, both Chris and Mark sing backing vocals for you so that you can go for the high notes and still have a full sound.

MB: One of the underlying musical themes [on *Mechanized Warfare*] is to see how interesting we can get without ruining the vocal part. It's easy to get completely out in left field and do all kinds of wacky stuff, but a lot of it would completely ruin the vocal lines. I think on a lot of the tracks on *Mechanized Warfare* we are doing a lot more progressive things than we would normally do, but not so that it would interfere with Harry's vocal part at all.

MM: How did you go about creating the crazy out-of-control ending of "Judgement Day" [off *Fourth Judgement*]?

MB: That track particularly [is based on] our huge Dio-era Black Sabbath influence, "Heaven And Hell," "Sign Of The Southern Cross." That's just me writing my interpretation of that sort of epic track. I then just gave the music to Harry and told him "Go for it." I usually have a vocal idea in mind, yet I usually don't tell it to Harry because he'll come up with something better.

MM: Sabbath with Dio. Which album is the best of those three?

MB, HC, CB and RS [in unison]: *Mob Rules*.

MM: Do you prefer *Mob Rules* to the Ozzy stuff as well?

MB: Oh yeah. Definitely. Ozzy's stuff is okay, but Dio [was better]. I was a big Rainbow fan and when I heard that Dio joined Sabbath, I couldn't believe it.

John Tetter: Dio has the more intense feel for that kind of music.

MM: What drummers are really influential for you?

RS: Probably #1 is Cozy Powell.

MB: He had a Top 40 hit playing drums to

"Dance With The Devil" that came out when I was a kid. I bought the single.

RS: I'm also a big Stewart Copeland fan [Police] and John Bonham [Led Zeppelin] too.

MM: Your drumming is stylistically similar to Vinny Appice who played on *Mob Rules*; that totally grooved, spacious and hard-hitting sound.

RS: Sure, yeah. That's some great stuff. [When I lay down drum tracks] I lay so far back on the click track that I'm almost pushing.

MM: Vinny Appice went to the edge of being "in time" to the degree that he was often about one hit away from being in another

dial.

MM: Are you saying you're more metal than Harry?

RS: Yeah, exactly.

MM: Did you decide ahead of time that you would write half of the songs and that Broderick would write the other half?

MB: Both of us just try to come up with the best stuff that we can, and it's just happened to be half and half on the past couple of albums.

CB: I think it makes for a great blend of our writing styles. Mark writes much more with a vocalist in mind, which is great thing, because let's face it—people relate to the vocalist. I tend to write a little more rhythmically.

MM: What are your plans for supporting this album?

JT: We're trying to get full-blown European and US tours after the New Year. Mark and Harry's wives are having kids.

MM: Congratulations.

JT: Mark's wife is having twins and Harry's wife is having...

MM: Something evil?

RS: I think it's logical to say that here in the States, we'll probably open for somebody.

MM: Is Manowar a possibility?

MB, HC, CB, RS and JT: [In unison] Yeah!

RS: Let's face it. We're in a position where we would benefit much more by opening for a band bigger than us to get more exposure. We go online all the time to check the lay of the land and we're just shocked sometimes that we get into certain areas and people talk about bands like Manowar and these people have no idea who we are. If we could tour with a band like that, or Iced Earth, or Blind Guardian, or another of that caliber, it would be very beneficial to us. Who knows though? *Mechanized Warfare* is getting such great reviews maybe the tide will turn this time. I'd love to do a headlining tour because then we get to play everything we want to play. But if we really want to increase the fan base, we've got to open up for somebody like that.

MB: I searched the Manowar board last week. I think there were 4,000 posts and not one mention of Jag Panzer—despite mentions of a ton of other bands. Not to be egotistical, but that just blows me away, how

continued on page 109



song.

RS: [laughing] The click track keeps us very disciplined. Most of our set is done to tempo tracks because we have keyboard and violin [samples]. We know that just because my adrenaline is going [in a live performance], I'm not going to play three times as fast.

MM: Vocal influences. Hallford or Dio?

HC: Both. [Iron Maiden's Bruce] Dickinson was probably my biggest influence. Mark, John and I have all grown up together. We've known each other since second grade. When Mark and John were in a band called Purple Haze, they just started thinking, "Maybe Harry would be a good singer." All of a sudden *Number Of The Beast* came out, and we were just like, "There's been nothing like this." I started singing to it, and I was like "Wow, I can make my voice a little bit like that. Maybe I'll be a metal singer."

RS: I got on the Iron Maiden bandwagon with *Killers*. I saw them tour with Di'Anno in a

shorts

For sale: Tons of used CDs, tapes, demos, videos and other stuff for very cheap prices. Mostly underground death and black metal. Have some other kinds of metal too. Just send first class stamps to: **Adhab Alfarhas, 11300 Attingham Lane, Glenn Dale, MD, 20769**

32-year-old single white male into **Cradle Of Filth, Cannibal Corpse, Obituary, Catastrophic, Judas Priest, Blunt Force Trauma, Brewtality** (those are two great Austin local bands), **G.G. Allin, Ozzy, Slayer, Emperor, Type O Negative, Testament, Death, Overkill** and a whole lot more. Also into ghost hunting and vampires. Any gothic, punk, or metal females please write me. Will answer all. I'm also looking for a female that would like to act as my manager in pro wrestling. I have been doing that for the past six years. You would have to love to travel. Please send a photo if interested. **Eddie Guill, P.O. Box 22, Pledger, TX 77468. E-mail: Eddie2005@webtv.net**

27-year-old gay male into the occult, Wicca, etc. Listen to: **Opeth, Cradle Of Filth, Marduk, Emperor, Mayhem, Dimmu Borgir, Old Man's Child, Dark Throne, Immortal** and other black/death bands. I also like **Pantera, Sepultura**, Goth bands, Nirvana, old Metallica etc. Other gay and bi-males please write. Perverts and prisoners and also welcomed. **Steve Hunes, 11405 Perch St., Lot 26, Hudson, FL 34669**

"Innocent", longhaired Asian bassist seeking band to play music. Into death black metal, videos like *Traces Of Death* etc. Anything that relates to the underneath. Vengeance, cannibalism, incarcerated on marijuana charges. If you are that band please write. Correspondence still welcome from all metal fans. Appeal pending. Until then, keep it heavy. **Long Way #00047-111, 3901 Klein Blvd., Lompoc, CA 93436**

22-year-old Aussie male into anything within the metal spectrum but has a specific preference for the extreme. I totally worship black metal such as **Marduk, Enthroned, Immortal, War, Mayhem, Impaled Nazarene**, (old) **Emperor, Barium, Judas Iscariot, Enslaved, Thornspawn** and many more. I also have a par-

ticular thirst for death metal such as **Cannibal Corpse, Autopsy, Obituary, Deicide, Incantation**, etc. Interested in tape trading or simply corresponding with like-minded individuals of any age or sex. No Christians. **James B., 2 Monash Rd., Gladesville, N.S.W. 2111, Australia**

Demo tape collector seeks the following demo tapes: **Beseech - Tears, Beseech - A Lesser Kind Of Evil, X-Ecutioner** (pre-Obituary), **Damrage - The Harsh Reality, Vermin** (anything by them), **Corpse Vomit - Gathering Chemical Children, Sanguinary** (anything after '95 demo), **Overlord** (anything after *Overlord*), **Hatred** (anything) and **Deceiver** (anything). **Kevin Hammond, 361 Kelly Farm Rd., Newnan, GA 30263**

Hard-rock fans check out **Uncle Light** featuring "Insane Wayne". Influences include: **UFO, Gamma, Montrose, Deep Purple, ZZ Top, Johnny Winter, Max Webster** etc. Fans, record labels, magazines, 'zines, radio stations, web 'zines etc. please get in touch, CD available. **Uncle Light, c/a Insane Wayne Ward, 721 Acewood Blvd., Madison, WI 53714. E-mail: unclelight@hotmail.com**

20-year-old SWM currently incarcerated. Missing the sounds of **Cannibal Corpse, My Dying Bride, Eyehategod, Morbid Angel, Dimmu Borgir, Six Feet Under** and lots more. Any metal chicks are welcomed to write. Age, race and looks don't matter. **Daniel Gill #966523, P.O. Box 41, Michigan City, IN 46361-0041**

Blond hair, blue eyed female lead vocalist looking to start a serious metal band. I play piano/keyboards, have 12 years playing out experience and 250 originals. Willing to relocate anywhere. Influences include **Dream Theater, Ozzy, Styx, Kansas, Hearts** etc. **Michelle Emerson, 601 E. Hillcrest Dr., 53593**

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20-year-old male. Have been in prison since I was 16-years-old. Looking for any open-minded people to write me. I get out in late 2003. I'm into **Napalm Death, Ministry, Slayer, Melvins, Gwar, Samael, Brujeria, Sepultura, Mudvayne** and many more. **Max Boor, Box 5911 SDSP, Sioux Falls, SD 57117**

15-year-old male into **Cannibal Corpse, Six Feet Under, Vader, Nile, Incantation, Ancient, Slayer, Morbid Angel, Dying Fetus, Immolation, Immortal, Slipknot, Angel Corpse, Cryptopsy, God Dethroned, Catastrophic, S.O.D., Obituary, Anal Blast, Vomit Remnants, Angel Dust, Malevolent Creation, Decayed Divinity, Acid Bath, Cradle Of Filth** and more. Can I get a female pen pal who knows death metal? **Blastaddict1@yahoo.com**

18-year-old male into **Slayer, Cradle Of Filth, Six Feet Under, Cannibal Corpse, Fear Factory**, and anything fast and hard. Seeking people to write. Girls or guys welcome. Also into



Paranormal Infusion. Dark metal from North Carolina has a 19-song demo called *Local Breed Of The Night Kingdom*. Write and get it for free. It's sure to blow your face off. **Paranormal Infusion, P.O. Box 3204, Cullowhee, NC 28723**



Monkey Finger Toes. Paul LaPlaca, former frontman for Brooklyn's October Thorns puts out his first CD. The 9-track disc features 3 previously unreleased songs that were part of Thorns live sets but not included on their demo. A wide variety of material is presented here with prog and metal influences meshing with Zappa-esque humor and pop sensibilities. Contact: monkeyfingertoes@yahoo.com

tattoos, piercings, poetry, grave yards, art, fighting, concerts and literature. Photos appreciated. **Ronnie Klapper, P.O. Box 1202, Mt. Washington, PA 40047**

27-year-old gay male looking for other head banging, gay men into **Slayer, Pantera, Cradle Of Filth, Iced Earth, Obituary, Cannibal Corpse, Kittie, Disturbed**, etc. Also into horror movies, road trips, body piercings and tattoos. **Jeremy Brandie, P.O. Box 1184, Sandpoint, ID 83864**

21-year-old male into **Cradle Of Filth, Borknagar, Dimmu Borgir, Marduk, Emperor, God Dethroned, Spiral Architect** and **Dark Funeral**. Seeking pen pals all over the world. Also desperately seeking cassettes of the following: **Emperor — Anthems At Welkin...**, **At The Gates — Slaughter Of...**, **God Dethroned — Christhunt**. Must be in good condition. Just write or send lists and prices. **Joel c/o Banaga Office, Sto. Nino St., Poblacion 2, Midsayap, Cotabato, 9410 Philippines**

I'm tired, disappointed and it's just not getting any better. I want real people into metal. I'm into

Blood For Blood, Hatebreed, My Dying Bride, Asphyx, Goatlord and the non-popular, 80s thrash band **Coven**. Traders or not, write your thoughts and feelings about everything including those who annoy you most. **Garry Maba, 159 Cucumber Alleys, Hangar Market, 2600 Baguio City, Philippines.** Mike Kordistas or Monroeville, PA, why don't you write me?

18-year-old Native American male looking for other metal heads anywhere. Into: **Slayer, Morbid Angel, Exhumed, Deaden, Diabolic, Cannibal Corpse, Pungent Stench, Black Lodge, Black Horse** and any native music. I'm into pow-wows and other shit. Would surely like to hear from other death/black/grind metal bands out there. Send demos! Ladies write. **Stewart Billie, 750 Gusdorf Rd., Apt. # 402, Taos, NM 87571**

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24-year-old male artists/musician looking to correspond with people all over the world. Into: **Sins If Thy Beloved, Borknagar, Dimmu Borgir, Ancient, Emperor, Cradle Of Filth, Death, Abigor, Old Man's Child, Neurosis, Henry Rollins** and many more. Also into the dark ages, the spirit world, Ouija, dark romantic

poetry and things that exists beyond our world and imagination. Like to hear from all pen preferable females. Will answer all. **Barry Bailey, P.O. Box 5911, Sioux Falls, SD 57117**

25-year-old female prisoner, 5'2", 110 lbs, blond hair, green eyes, loves **Slayer, old Metallica, Pantera** etc. Loves erotic films and books, tattoos and all things wild. Will answer all. Tattoos and all things wild. Will answer all. **M. Hayes #446929, 3060 FM 3514, Beaumont, TX 77705**

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Endemoniada webzine is dedicated to giving exposure to female bands and artists of the metal, hardcore, punk, industrial, gothic, and bizarre genre. We don't exclude bands which are predominantly male. We seek to balance the gender role within our musical scene. For a long

shorts

continued

time females performers, bands and artists of this music were barely covered and we decided to do something about it. Many of you are familiar with our fanzine and we thank all of those who supported us throughout the years. Instead of wasting so much paper we decided to make this a webzine as the amount of pages in our 'zine started to make Endemoniada look more like a book. Enjoy Endemoniada! <http://www.endemoniada666.com/> Issue #14 featuring: **Heidnik, Hypocrisy, Mahavatar, The Missing, Satan's Sweet Slavery Zine, Tura Satana, Lack Of Goths etc.**

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28-year-old male prisoner. Done eight, one to go. Dark soul. Write lyrics. Seeks pals into **Iron Maiden, Slayer, WASP, Helloween, Judas Priest, Metallica etc.** Miguel Chacon #667168, Rt. 1 Box 150, Tenn Colony, TX 75884

27-year-old male seeking like minded females into **Susperia, Cradle Of Filth, Dimmu Borgir, Opeth, Old Man's Child, Lacuna Coil, The Gathering, Dry Kill Logic, Marilyn Manson, The Sins Of Thy Beloved, My Dying Bride, Katatonia, Neurosis, Dismal Euphony, Seraphim Shock, Theatre Of Tragedy, The Haunted**, black metal, goth music/art, vampires, Brian Lumley novels, Hong Kong cinema, art, Japanese animation, interesting conversation, darkness etc. Send picture if possible: **Chris Ronallo, 104 Pat Mews Dr., Wilmerding, PA 15148. E-mail: cromallo@aol.com**

24-year-old male seeking like minded females into **Pantera, Sepultura, Dimmu Borgir, Iced Earth, Type O Negative, Black Sabbath, Six Feet Under, napalm Death,**

The Gathering, Lacuna Coil, Overkill, Cradle Of Filth, Susperia, Days Of The New, Slayer, Skrape, Nothingface, Neurosis, Anthrax, S.O.D., Seraphim Shock, Fear Factory, Machine Head, darkness, philosophy, photography, history, metal music/concerts, long hair, open mindedness and interesting conversation. **Mike Montedoro Jr., 5 Ohm St., N. Versailles, PA 15137. E-mail: HaggisEye@aol.com**

22-year-old male Satanist into black, death, hardcore and thrash such as: **Dark Throne, Old Man's Child, Earth Crisis, Death and Six Feet Under.** Also into horror movies, tattoos, piercings and church burnings. If you're into rap and nu metal, don't write. But if you're sick and twisted write me at: **Santos Reues, 9837 Palomino Dr., Odessa, TX 79764**

36-year-old regular guy into **Testament.** Anybody who has stuff on them please write to: **Duff Levitan, 7785 Lavon, Clarkston, MI 48348**

18-year-old open minded female vocalist/poetess/journalist/bastardess into: **Opeth, Soilwork, Amorphis, Moonspell, Death (older) Cradle Of Filth, Type O Negative, Godgory**, all of **Maynard Keenan's** projects, **Nine Inch Nails, Alice In Chains, Arch Enemy, The Cure, My Dying Bride, Anal Cunt** (fucking hilarious), **Floyd** and much more. I love music that can take you to another world. I also like photography, writing, medieval shit, traveling, learning about why the hell we are here, finding common ground with people etc. Those (preferably males and age does not matter) who are sick of solitude: artists, musicians, poets, lonely, trapped, bored or just want someone who can relate, please write. Those who cannot respect the difference that make us our own, please don't write: **Allison Magdic, 463 28th St., McKeesport, PA 15132**

Extreme black metal stuff for sale: **Graveland, Nokturnal Mortum, Kataxu, Hate Forest** etc. For full list send \$1.00. Also looking for **Lords Of Chaos** book. **Jacek Korniluk, Powst Wilkp. 30/10, L1-018 LODZ, Poland**

17-year-old male into **Skinless, Cannibal Corpse, Cephalic Carnage, Mortician, Blood Duster, Jungle Rot, Amorphis,**



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Soilent Green, Neurosis, Cradle Of Filth, Slayer, Danzig, Eyehategod, Buzzoven, Acid Bath, Sepultura, Nasum and anything hard, fast and not a male. Also into drugs, alcohol, hardcore porn, Jack Daniels and women. Looking for females to corrupt with my ideas and vies (or vice versa). **Poston Kelly, 732 Lynch Rd., Coward, SC 29530**

Bi, white metal head. 31-years-old into **Halford, Maiden, King Diamond**, tape trading, adult videos, etc. Seeks correspondence with male prisoners. **Mark J. Maras, 4836 Douglas Rd. #16, Toledo, OH 43613**

27-year-old male seeking like minded people into **Black Sabbath, Primer 55, Linkin Park, Puya, Fear Factory, Machine Head, Soufly, Spineshank, Deicide, Six Feet Under, Cannibal Corpse**, darkness, candles, goth things, etc. **Don Montedoro, 345 Welsh Ave., Wilmerding, PA 15148, gooberfromPA@aol.com**

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(Pics cannot be returned.
Sorry, Charlie.)

CRYPTOPSY



MY DAMN COLUMN

continued from page 73

Shadows Fall



Throwdown CDs. This Day Forward [see "Fast Forward" profile elsewhere this issue—Mike G] Another Victim's final show with bodies everywhere. Circle Of Dead Children — fucking vicious. Sworn Enemy — New York thugcore at its finest. Firecrackers in the middle of Matyr AD's set and the death threats to that firecracker crackling person. All Else Failed — so hot and fantastically raw, my camera lens kept steaming up. After the set you could see droplets of blood all over the stage and floor. The fuckhead who thought it fun to let off a stinkbomb in the middle of an enclosed area with 100-degree stagnant heat. The guy with flaming red velvet sneakers. Premonitions Of War — Bow your head and hope you don't get demolished. Killswitch Engage. Diecast. Catastrophic. When an AEF member (who shall remain nameless) made a sailboat out of a decorative basket in the hotel, took it to the bathroom, filled it

with steamy poop fresh outta the poop can, then marched, with an army of excited poop watchers, to the hotel pool to send it asail. The next morning, the boat had sunk but the poops were floating merri-

ly to shore. Straightedge kids drank Red Bull (isn't that somehow wrong?). Burn It Down's last set (starring our own Ryan Downey). Pig Destroyer. Mastadon. Keelhaul. Santa Sangre. Maharaj. Earth Crisis, whose vocalist, Karl Buechner, told us "I've never seen a pit as wild!" There were so many other killer bands on this thing (nearly 100 in total) that I haven't the space to blab about (Hellfest could be a feature in itself — maybe next year): But of all the things I did, bands I saw and sweat I swat, there was one very important lesson I came home with: In the end it all goes back to *Reign In Blood*. (www.hellfest.com)

Newark, NJ — River Front Rampage, Riverfront Stadium: This was the Ozzfest that wasn't. It's amusing to think a college radio station (South Orange NJ's WSOU Seton Hall University 89.5 FM), celebrating 10 years of metal programming could put together two dozen bands into a more stimulating fest than Sharon Osbourne herself! The stage was on the field. Only 200 metalheads were stage-side while the grandstands were jam-packed. Apparently, SOU sold seating before general admission leaving many pissed peeps. Biohazard played their best set in like five years. Had

Circle Of Dead Children bleeding



they left out the new material completely, it would've been even better. ("Hate, Fuck, Fight, Kill," C'mon guys). They shot their next video there, all the while praising SOU and cursing MTV. Hatebreed incited the craziest circle pit ever. Six Feet Under was a no-show. Ill Nino's signing at the Roadrunner table had kids in giant caravans bearing all things Ill Nino. Fløt like it lasted eight hours (and it probably could have had they let it). Who knew? Pro-Pain still glows with stomphappy NY pitness but they're like the unofficial SOU house band (though they still gave me flashbacks of that "Death On The Dance Floor" video). By 5 p.m. people seemed drunk and edgy stand dwellers bumrushed the field. Beer vendors closed (not sure if that was the reason why). Was on my way to the bathroom area when some guy carrying a two-

year old smeared with black metal facepaint sprung up at me to say, "We came from Alaska." Clutch was total dirty ass bar rock sludge. Lamb Of God tore the living shit out of assholes stadium wide. God Forbid, despite tech difficulties, did the same. Shadows Fall sounded near saintly spewing their Euro-inspired metalcore all over the field. Thursday is a cult I think with more fans than one would ever fathom. Wish I got a picture of the killer Misfits couple. They were perfectly Misfit-devil lock punk inked with Misfit logos and skulls. Had to leave at the beginning of Overkill's set to beat the Sunday night traffic which kinda sucked but Bobby Blitz's vocals are just as blisteringly shrill as they were for *Under The Influence* and to that I say, "Hell's yeah!"...It wasn't Wacken but it sure beat Ozzfest.

All Else Failed



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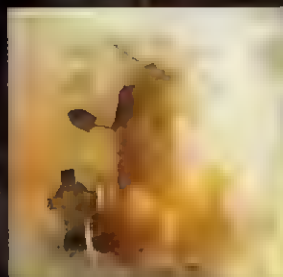
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The Gross-Out Artistry Of



by Ron Strauss

At 25 years old, vocalist/guitarist Sean McGrath of Impaled is searching for the finer things in life. It's a constant pilgrimage to find a store or area where he can buy rolling papers, a case of beer, government cheese, pig hearts and animal guts all in one shot. Yet in Oakland, California, he seems to have found it in a Vietnamese community where they slaughter live chickens and the place wreaks of death. He has found his gory paradise.

"We go to the Chinese market a lot. It's horrible and smells really bad," says McGrath of this wonderful oasis where they picked up the organs for the cover depiction of *Choice Cuts*, their second bloodbath on Necropolis Records,

released this year. The band's 2000 debut, *The Dead Shall Dead Remain*, was banned in over 42 countries after packaging employees at album assembly areas were disgusted by the gruesome—and hysterically fake—depiction on its cover.

"We did not intend to have any of our covers banned," says 25-year-old bassist, Ross Sewage. (His last name was taken from an Italian foodline rumored to be the Sewage's, who immigrated to the U.S. many moons ago—we think). "It was not planned at all."

In between blunt hits and the downing of many brews, you start to see that these mad scientists have one giant sick sense of humor. For *Choice Cuts*, they decided to do something that has not been tried at home before. "We are not actually cutting the head off of a baby," says McGrath. "You can see the Mattel sign of the

baby's foot, for God's sake." Actually in the photo you cannot, as Sean's hacksaw comes flush with its toy body which is covered in bloody birth juice. A young chick friendly with the band poses as the jilted mother giving in to the slaughter of her newborn. You can see the goat and pig innards are positioned around the infant for an afterbirth effect. It's like seeing the real gory side of a J.C. Penney Christmas photographer flip out on crystal meth.

"I took the photo," laughs Sewage. "[The baby] has the mind of a serial killer, but we had to put him to death anyway." Their continued gruesome-ness has led certain lame-ass fanzines to boycott covering the band and other Necropolis releases because advertisers threatened to pull their business. But our delightfully deranged staff here at *Maniacs* takes a certain degree of comfort in the fact that such kind-

hearted bands are out there. Impaled are our kind of people!

They got their start playing local gigs at a San Francisco bar tagged The Covered Wagon Saloon. They run a weekly spotlight for fiends of the night called Lucifer's Hammer, which is promoted and thrown by John Cobbett, whose band, Hammers Of Misfortune, is quite popular in the area. "Sean raped me," laughs Sewage, of how he met McGrath during the early gigging days at the venue, which has had such high-profile acts as Usurper and Mayhem. "We both have size 10 poop-shoots now."

They actually started the band in 1995 with Jared Deaver (Ex-Vile). Guitarist Leon Del Muerte used to be the vocalist. Then Deaver left the band, and Sewage joined in 1998. That lineup with drummer Raul Varela is the one they have now. And what a journey of sweaty, smelly, hairy, metal-man love it has been. Prior to signing with Necropolis, they released a split-seven-inch with Cephalic Carnage on an indie based in Italy called Headfucker Records.

Over the last two years they've been ushered into the grim road trip of underground metal touring on the November To Dismember Tour, March Metal Meltdown in New Jersey, and the Milwaukee Metal Fest. The most recent stint was with Vader, Skinless, Origi, and too many other bands on the cluttered Summertime Slaughter Tour, which rolled into the dingy wasteland of Brooklyn's L'Amour in New York this past July.

"We really tried to play 'No Sleep 'Til Brooklyn,' but it didn't happen," says McGrath, who insists they just couldn't get it down in between arguing with each other, and battling the lighting that was pointing almost directly in their faces. They blasted out a 45-minute set that oddly included a lot of older material like "Back To The Grave," "Feces Of Death," "Trocar" and "Flesh & Blood."

They've obviously had a less inebriated run of things with this previous tour than at the March Metal Meltdown. "We played at 12 in the afternoon completely hung over," remembers Sewage. "I remember waking up backstage with my head in the toilet bowl. Someone asked

me if I was ok, and I said that I was fine. Then I was told 'Get the fuck out of here.'"

"This past tour wasn't that great, but it had its high points," says McGrath, who like many of the bandmembers involved, felt like it could have been organized and promoted better. But after all, it does beat workin' a nine-to-five. So what does Impaled do when they're not on tour, or practicing? "I have no job, and I spend most of my time drinking or masturbating," says McGrath. "We have no problem telling everyone



how pathetic we really are," adds Sewage, who works at an online porn warehouse (www.gamelink.com) in his spare time.

They are compiling material for their new album, and taking in as much old Autopsy, Carcass, Entombed, Dissection and Repulsion albums they can get their spooze-covered hands on. They've already built up an impressive following just dying to see what these hysterical lunatics of grindrot will do next. *Choice Cuts* has an impressive regurgitation of previously unreleased tracks and some covers. "All That Rots," "Spirits Of The Dead," "With Shit I am Adorned" wrangle with new splattertracks like "Nightsoil" and "Until Death." Demo versions recorded in 1998 buffer the gutty new stew. Their cover of the Carcass classic, "Carneous Cacoffiny," is just another reason to have this badboy in your collection. They also

contributed the same track on *Requiem Of Revulsion: A Tribute To Carcass*, where they held their own regurgitating that legendary band's material with the likes of Rotten Sound, Nasum, Disgorged, General Surgery, Engorged, Bodies Lay Broken, Exhumed and many others.

With a handful of tours under their belts, two full-lengths, and a hoard of fans wondering what will come next, Impaled has definitely dropped a huge turd into the septic tank of deathly grindmetal.

"We've been extremely lucky," concludes Sewage. "I'm very proud to be part of this metal scene right now."

Official Web-Site: www.impaled.net

IMPALED Select Discography

From Here To Calostomy - 1999, demo
Split 7" w/ Cephalic Carnage - 1999,
Headfucker
The Dead Shall Dead Remain - 2000,
Death Vomit
Split 7" w/ Engorged - 2000
Choice Cuts - 2001, Necropolis

Zine And Not Heard

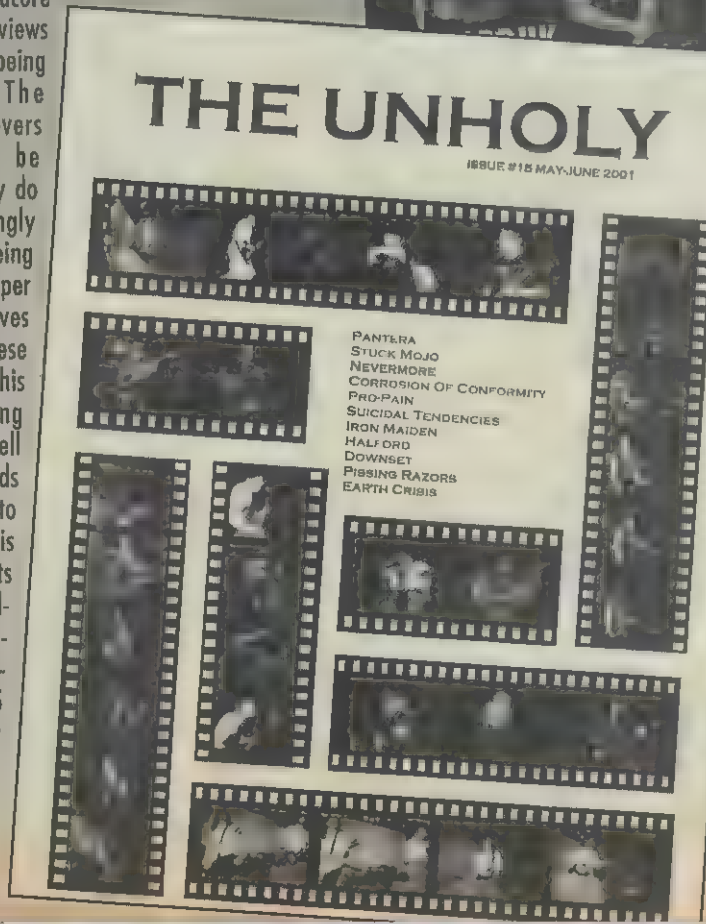
by Phil Kane

Behold! I am the stand-in 'zine keeper, balancer of good and evil amongst the free speaking, 'zine saturated world. Vile paper ogres shall be destroyed and our population wiped free of lousy literature. Translation = do a 'zine, do it well, do it with knowledge or don't do it at all.

Canada's **Unrestrained** absolutely rules the metal-reading planet and *has* for some time now. The glossy covered semi-color slab of brutality weighs in at 96 pages and is chock fulla *all* of Satan's favorite bands. While gazing through issue #16, I am reminded of just how metal this magazine really is. The featured bands on the cover are Absu, Marduk and Aborym. Other highlights include features on Cadaver Inc., Hate, Impaled, Keelhaul, Fear Factory and Candiria. But it's the monstrous 18 page Swedish Scene Report that affirms this issue's worth, a glimpse at some of Sweden's most prominent metallers who dominate the scene. Marduk, Katatonia, Opeth, Meshuggah, Darkane, Murder Squad, Deranged, Dissection, Amon Amarth and Lucyfire as well as Peter Tägtgren [Hypocrisy/Pain] and Dan Swano [Unicron]. But the Swedish revelry doesn't stop there. There's a buttload of quotes unveiling personal opinions, reflections and a near walk-through of the Swedish underground metal circuit. There's a nice little recap of the New England Metal /Hardcore

fest and oodles of LP reviews that rarely deviate from being plainly awesome. The **Unrestrained** posse covers everything that can be labeled "heavy" and they do it well. They've seemingly mastered the art of being brief yet meaty and super informative. This mag gives you a feel for what these bands are really like. All this meshed with outstanding writers, a killer layout, well utilized space, minimal ads and a sincere devotion to the metal scene make this rag one of the best of its kind. I sound like I'm selling you a car or something. Just check it out. -

Unrestrained! 5625
Glen Erin Dr Unit
#57, Mississauga ON
L5M 6V2 Canada -
www.unrestrained-



mag.com

The bold black and white cover of **Unholy** #15 is fairly eye-catching with photos of all bands lined as filmstrips [much like the *Maniacs* cover layout of not too long ago Liz]. This edition features interviews from Pantera, Nevermore, Iron Maiden, Earth Crisis, Suicidal Tendencies, Halford, C.O.C., Pro Pain and more. Things feel choppy though. The interviews read as though they've been shortened for space reasons most likely creating a rather rushed flow. The questions, though, are thoughtful and specific adding depth. This 'zine's only true flaw lies in its reviewing tactics. While **Unholy** covers all its bases from death metal to black metal to hardcore and thrash, it doesn't cover them very thoroughly. You don't get much more

than a vague idea of the band's metal subgenre, where they're from and that's about it. The reviewers leave much to the imagination. A discography is included at the end of each interview, which comes in handy. It's a nice thing to throw at the end of an Iron Maiden interview, especially when each of their albums are represented with a 1 1/4 inch mini. The layout is simple, bold and easy on the eyes, but could use some added artwork. Overall a good read for a quick metal fix with room for improvement. I can only see this mag getting better.

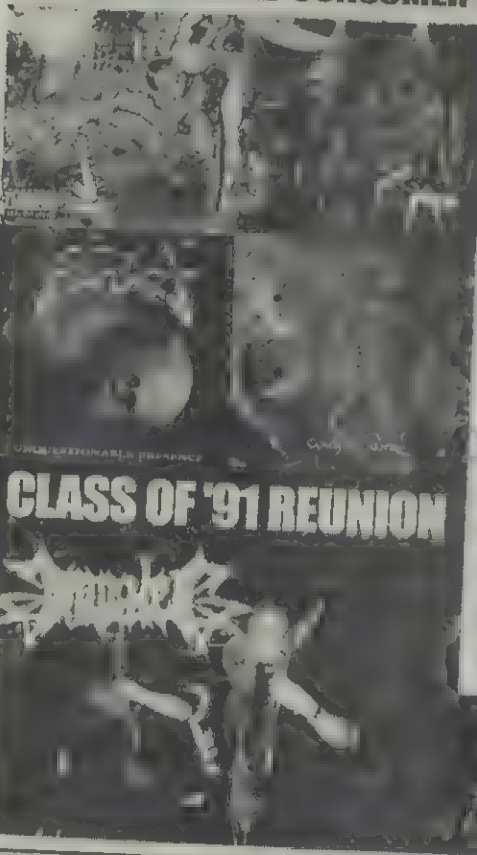
Unholy, P.O.
Box 860427

Shawnee, KS 66286-0427 - unholy@kc.rr.com

Anyone with a computer and internet access [Or a type writer and a glue stick. Those are the best! Liz] can put together a 'zine, but only those with deep dedication, artistic insight and a bit of unpredictability bring their art of 'zine creation to another dimension. Such is the case with *Read Between The Lies*, a little rag on its third issue. Originally based in California, RBTL has recently relocated to Pennsylvania. Judging from the random pictures, inside jokes and humor strewn throughout the mag, it would appear the makers of this jammie just wanna rock out and take the reader along for the ride. The mag caters to all flavors of heavy and has specialty writers assigned to each category making for a fairer critique. There's a stoner/doom rock guy, one scribe on the death/power/thrash trip, a punk rock/hardcore writer, a metalhead into death and thrash, and one dude who apparently digs "anything except wussy stuff." This last guy pens about 90% of the magazine. The reviews are honest and all-inclusive with even the negative verdicts getting legitimate clarification. Standard sized on newsprint, the issue I'm checking out holds interviews with Cryptopsy, Impaled, Atheist, Warhorse, Cathedral, Candiria and more. The interrogations are thoughtful, straying from the all-too-typical, "So how many days were you in the studio" kind of bore. These guys do their homework. The layout is simple and somehow reminiscent of the cut-and-paste 'zines of the early '90s. They use actual logos for every band, picture LP cover minis and there's not a square of wasted space to be found upon its 32 pages. It's all metal, baby! I tip my cap to these guys. It can only get better. New address coming soon. Contact - rbtlies@excite.com.

READ BETWEEN THE LIES

THE OPINIONATED CONSUMER GUIDE TO METAL



ISSUE #3 May 2001

STILL FREE

UNSANCTIFIED

BESCEAD

MALEVOLENT CREATION

IN AETERNUM

PCP

BITING BITTENMAN

CANDIRIA

CANDIED IN FLAME

BROKEN HOPE

CATHEDRAL

CRYPTOPSY

RELAPSE RECORDS

DEVIN TOWNSEND

Moving on just a bit to the e-word, webzines are becoming an increasingly popular branch of 'zinedom. Sure, there's tons of two-bit e-pages o' crap just needy of a virus but still there are some with redeeming qualities: the ones that are updated consistently, newsworthy and user-friendly. One of the better but lesser known webzines I've come across in recent weeks is *Info Obscurity*. Though the graphic quality isn't the hottest, the website itself is created by a bunch of kids (perhaps only one actually) who know their shit. Webmaster Dan covers everything within the realms of hardcore and metal and any possible inbreedings, that is, everything Hydrahead, Relapse, Equal Vision, Century Media, Goodlife, Ferret, Nuclear

2001

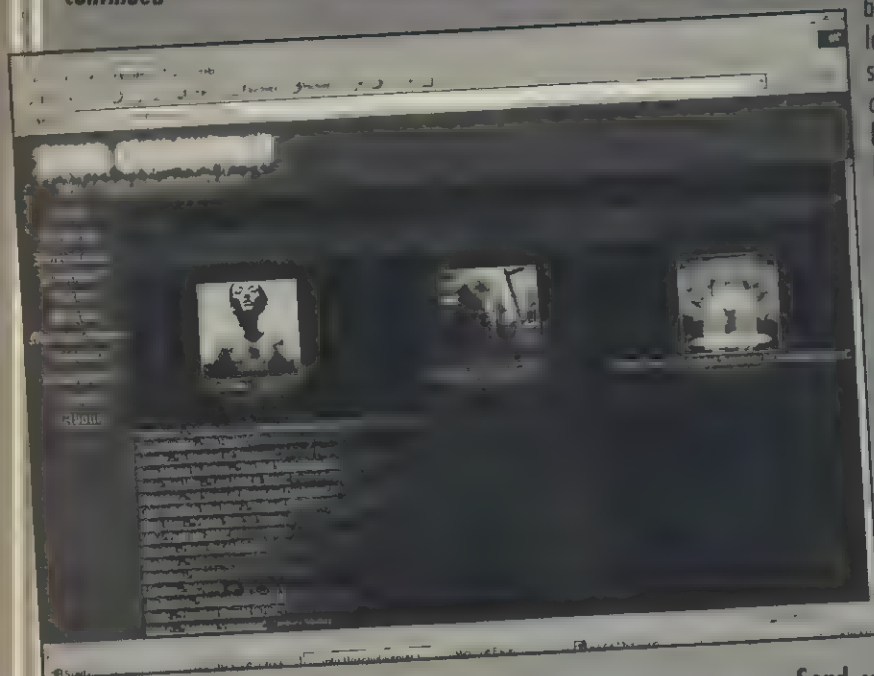
SLAYER

SKINNERS / VOICE OF DISORDER / ANNA / 150T WATER MUSIC
RABBIT / SHERMAN / THE SICK / THE DEAD
GOD ON / (HEAD) / SICK DOG



Zine And Not Heard

continued



Blast, Roadrunner, Tee Pee and countless others. It seems as though the reviews are posted as soon as the records are serviced. The feedback is conversant; if it sucks they'll say it though they thoroughly back up any such slashes. There's constant contests for free swag because free crap always rules. There's also two MP3 stations run by the site, interviews, local and regional show listings, a killer message board, a guest book and links to bands, labels, 'zines, vendors and more. It's free! Check it out - www.info-obscurity.com

Eat Magazine. It rules. It's a shame I can't read a damn word of it. It's all in Japanese but I have a feeling it smokes. The headline on the cover reads: "Shit music for bad people! This is the worst music magazine in the world!" thus I'm automatically inclined to dig it. The cover finds Slayer in a trippy blue/green fade on black. The main features are Beast Feast, Slayer, Neurosis, Pig Destroyer, Skinless, V.O.D., Amen, Raging Speedhorn and Hot Water Music. The mag is completely varied. Color outside, black and white in, the computer guys behind *Eat Magazine* are graphic sages. Thick textures, splattered designs, fades, text wraps. If I could read Japanese, I'd have a copy of this magazine on my table, in my bag, one at work and one by my toilet. I'd never be anywhere without it. I may just walk around with this one and act like I can read it. <http://www.eatmagazine.net>

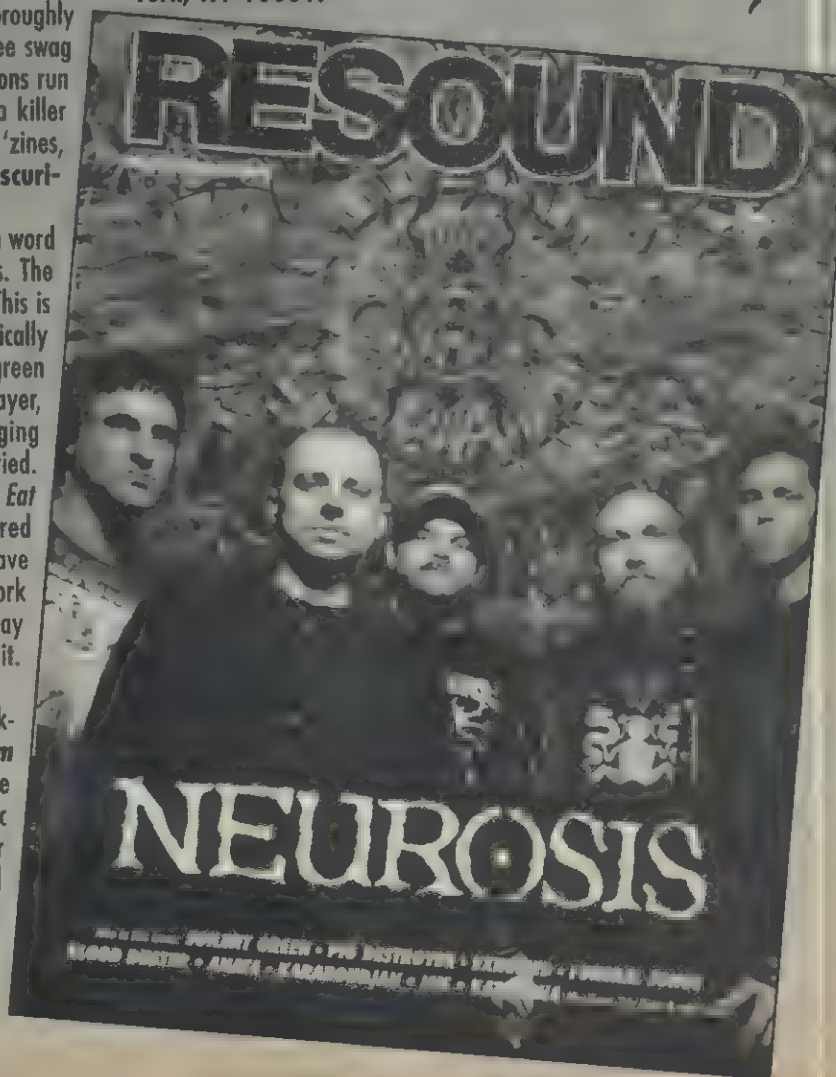
Anyone into stoner rock with a yen for psychedelic-looking mags with ruling graphics must get **Vincebus Eruptum** (issue #5) from Italy. This oversized 42+ pager of pure reefer-ready loveliness features interviews with The Atomic Bitchwax, 500 Ft. Of Pipe, Roachpowder, Wellwater Conspiracy, Dead Meadow, Black Cat Bones, Leaf Hound and more plus tons of lengthy reviews, commentaries and graphics. The Wellwater Conspiracy interview comes complete with a family tree so you can trace exactly where the Wellwater Conspiracy came from (Soundgarden,

Monster Magnet, Hater, Kyuss etc.....this band has some deep deep roots) and the Leaf Hound story has a handy discography. The

beauty of *Vincebus Eruptum* is that it's glossy and well layed out yet somehow glows with enough done-at-home spice to give it that true 'zine flavor. I think it may be available in Italian as well. No price so write to - **Davide Pansolin, Via Chiavell 24/11, 17100 Savona, Italy - vincebus@vinylmagic3.it**

Another honorable mention in the realm of metal reading pleasures must be awarded to Relapse for their almighty **Resound Magazine**. What unfolded from a mere mail order catalog has turned into an incredibly well written glimpse into the utter chaos that is Relapse Records. Besides the excellent layout, there are tons of killer interviews with almost all of their bands and news out the ass on upcoming events, records and more. This particular cover holds the demons of anguish themselves, **Neurosis**. Also within the pages are interviews with Soilent Green, Mastadon, Pig Destroyer, Dying Fetus, Skinless, Deceased, Blood Duster, Amorphis and everyone else within the Relapse cult. Cheers! **Resound, P.O. Box 2060 Upper Darby, PA 19082 - www.relapse.com**

Send your 'zines for review to: Metal Maniacs attn: 'Zine And Not Heard, 333 7th Ave., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10001. *JS*



BEKUTAI TEKUTIH



FLOTSAM & JETSAM's

by Matt Johnsen

Phoenix, AZ — When most people think thrash, they think Exodus, Slayer, Dark Angel or Destruction. I think Flotsam and Jetsam. Back in the day, you could still be thrash with a great singer, and in such '80s bands as F&J, Forbidden, Heathen and Realm, aggressive brutal music was also melodic. Times have changed. Most of those bands are gone. Flotsam And Jetsam remain and are still kicking ass. While this reporter will always swear by second album *No Place For Disgrace*, the band still makes great music. My God is their best in a long time. I spoke with guitarist Mark Simpson and he proved to be a good sport about everything from *My God* to *Vanilla Ice*.

Metal Maniacs: What did you do before F&J?

Mark Simpson: I was in a side-project with Kelly [Smith, former drummer] and Jason [Ward, bass] called Boneside, then Frank White & The Spades. We just liked to go out and really annoy people, make everyone in the bar leave as quickly as possible. It was horrifying but fun. I knew Jason before he was in Flotsam. He was always rooting, trying to get me in the band and it finally worked. Mike [Gilbert,

former guitarist] and Kelly quit so the band needed someone to tour. Jason goes, "So dude, are you ready to go?" I was like, "I know the freakin' material, I'm ready!"

MM: I saw you on the *High* tour. You played a lot of old songs and took requests!

MS: I learned all the popular ones off every record. I knew like 80 out of their 90 songs! I had no idea what they were gonna pick or what they were gonna have me try out with. I just learned as much as possible. But as for some of the old stuff, some of that stuff I've been playing since it came out, when I was 13 or 14.

MM: So you've been a Flotsam fan from day one?

MS: Always. I grew up down the street from them!

MM: I interviewed Eric A.K. before the *High* show and made an idiot out of myself because I somewhat bluntly accused him of not being able to hit the high notes anymore. He said, "I can do it, but I'm not that into it." The band opened with "Doomsday For The Deceiver" and he pulled out the first scream in the beginning and I felt like a jackass!

MS: [laughs] Oh yeah! It's all up to him. Some days he'll just do it, and some days he doesn't want to. And I don't blame him! It's just terror on his throat. After 20 years of that, it's time to move on. Try something different.

MM: *Unnatural Selection* was the first album you recorded with the band. Did you write any of those songs?

MS: Four or five. We just got off the European tour. We were out for four



GOD

months, and we were burnt out. Still, we went right into the studio without any time off, trying to bust out an album real quick. It turned out pretty good, but we didn't have enough time to add many layers, or incorporate much thought. It was a bunch of riffs and grooves in little songs, cool but I like putting different flavors in there and we just didn't have the time.

MM: I think that album sounds very rushed, especially after *High*, and the production is really thin.

MS: We had all kinds of problems.

MM: Why didn't you record it with Bill Metoyer?

MS: I don't know. That still boggles me. It had to do with

our ex manager. There was all kinds of problems with that, this whole big manager thing.

MM: Are you talking about Eric Braverman?

MS: Yes.

MM: I was going to ask about him, because he's been a notable feature on the last few albums, and he even has songwriting credits, but he's not mentioned at all on the last album or two. So what happened?

around better album. You obviously had a lot more time to work on this one.

MS: I started writing last January with the drum machine, arranging, making sure everything was Flotsam-worthy, so I could bring it to Jason and Ed without them laughing or throwing stuff at me. Then they added melody and it became full Flotsam! When we got into the studio, we had pretty much all of the songs ready to go. Including vocals. Bill was great. I worked with him every day. We got different sounds and tones, even sampling TV sounds! No rules, man, whatever we wanted to do we could do. It was great.

MM: I notice you have a big list of equipment endorsements at the bottom of the CD booklet.

MS: I got 'em when I toured with Lynch Mob and didn't get a chance to thank 'em 'til now.

MM: Are you familiar with *Distortion* by

MS: He was fired after *Unnatural Selection*. I came in on the tail end of that and tried to stay out of it.

MM: The new album sounds a lot more thought-out. It's thicker, heavier, just an all-

Forbidden?

MS: Is that recent?

MM: Not really. Mid '90s, maybe.

MS: I remember *Twisted Into Form*, but not that one.

MM: The new Flotsam album reminds me of it a lot and there's a parallel. Both bands started around the same time. Both were high-pitched thrash and moved into a slower, more groove-oriented thing. Plus, there are some very weird similarities between that album and *My God*. Some riffs and some cadences sound really similar.

MS: The last one I have is *Twisted Into Form*, then I thought they were gone. They were a great band. With fast songs, they're fun, but there's only so much you can do with 'em. You have the riffs, then the vocals, solos, but if you put too many layers on top of that, it sounds like noise, which is why I like the more mid-paced stuff. Hey, whatever comes out comes out and that's how I like to write, you can add so many different melodies on the top.

MM: That said, I think the fast songs on the new album are really good, and, on the whole, *My God* seems to be a bit faster than the last album.

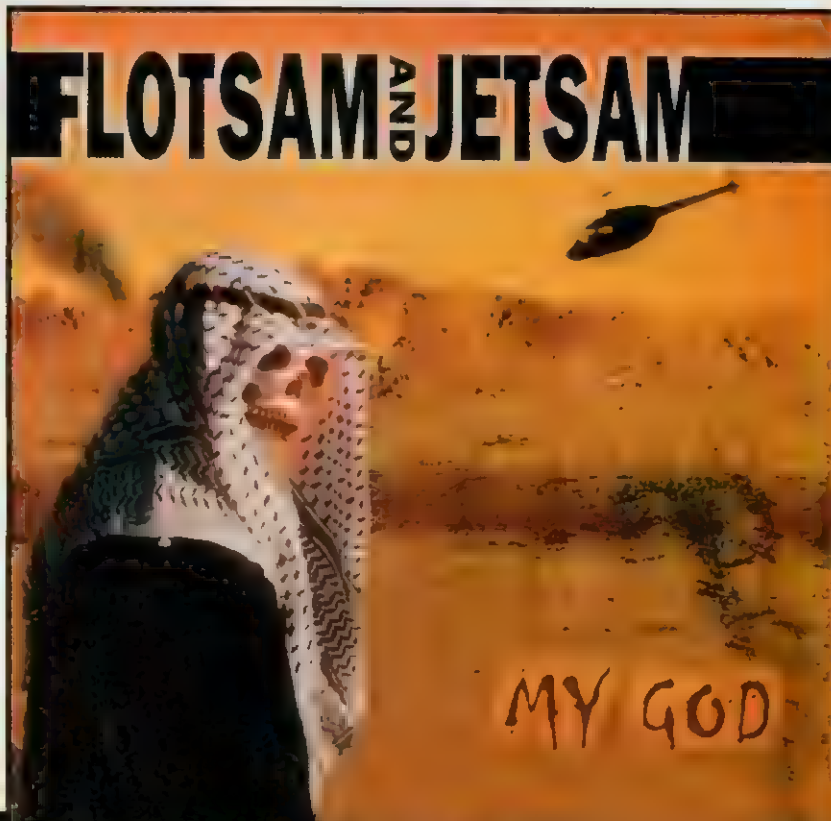
MS: Oh yeah. A couple of those I wrote for *Unnatural Selection*, but they just didn't make it. We didn't feel anything for it, like "Camera Eye."

MM: That's one of my favorites! My favorite, though, is "Keep Breathing."

It's got an odd time signature and an almost progressive vibe with a really neat lurch.

MS: Yeah, that one was one of the last ones I had on the tape, and I played it to Craig and he was like, "Oh my God, dude! You've got to do that one!" And I was like, "Well, I don't know. I don't really like that one." And then we started playing it, and we were like, "Holy shit!" and then Jason and Ed added their things and we were like, "Fuck! This song is gonna be awesome." It's definitely one of my favorites, too.

more



FLOTSAM & JETSAM

continued

MM: It sounds like Craig really opened up a lot on this album. On the last disc, his first recorded appearance, I wasn't impressed. I remembered him being really

time, we didn't really have the time. He took like two days to do all of his tracks. It was retarded.

MM: Who is Widow's Rose and why are

some sort of funny heavy metal anthem, like "heavy metal guys don't dance." But it's not about that at all. It's a serious song, as far as the lyrics are concerned, but you'd never know it just listening to the chorus.

MS: Yeah, Eric's all about being serious.

MM: I bet it's a lot of fun to play, too, with all those backing vocals.

MS: That's gonna be one of the ones we do live, too. That's what I've been doing today, trying to come up with the new stuff for the tour.

MM: A tour in the States?



good live, but on disc it just didn't come through. On the new disc, though, he sounds great! Maybe he was too reserved on the last one?

MS: Craig is an incredible player live. He'll scare the hell out of anybody. He's a monster, a freakin' monster. But then when you're in the studio, you've got to do everything with the click, and it's all precise and you have to hold back a little bit. Everyone's gotta hold back, and that takes away from a lot of it. But for this one, he learned more when he can go off and when he can't, and he really tore it up. The last

you stealing their riffs?

MS: [laughs] That was Jason's old band from Chicago who all moved here. I don't remember that song [A riff from the song "Learn To Dance" on *My God* is credited to Widow's Rose] but I guess it was one of their tunes back then. And I guess it was a riff that's been bouncing around in his head for this many years, and he was like, "Oh shit! We gotta do this song!" So I have no idea.

MM: "Learn to Dance" is really fun. The first time I listened to it, I didn't really pay attention to the lyrics, and I thought it was

MS: Yeah, in the end of September. Then Europe after that.

MM: What does "I.A.M.H." stand for? Or is that top-secret?

MS: It stands for "It Ain't Merle Haggard." That's something my mom used to tell me when I brought home wacky metal albums. So I wanted to do a song for her. [Your mom is obviously very cool. — Mike G]

MM: Is it a rule that Flotsam And Jetsam albums have to have songs with abbreviated titles.

MS: No, but I definitely took advantage

of the fact that there are a lot of those.

MM: What does "P.A.A.B." stand for?

MS: Aw shit, man. That's the only one I can't remember.

MM: "E.M.T.E.K"?

MS: That's just the initials of all the band members.

MM: There's a page of an Arabic newspaper printed in the back of the CD tray. Where did that come from?

MS: Jason got it off the computer. We were gonna call the album *Obsessive Repulsive* at one point, and then we were gonna call it simply *Flotsam And Jetsam*, but we just couldn't come up with any cover ideas at all. Then finally we had a week to go in recording, and we had to get everything done. All the artwork, all the songs, all the music, and we had to turn it into Metal Blade in a week. And we had nothing, just goofy ideas. Then Eric was recording his vocals for "My God," and we were like, "Oh shit!" because we hadn't heard it before. We didn't do it in practice. And Craig and Jason started going off with different ideas for the cover, and Jason launched into this whole thing about how he wanted to go out into the desert and put on one of those, whatever you call them, smocks, and get a tank and have a blood sea and all this shit. And I was like, "Jason, dude, we've only got a week to get all this! There's no fucking way!" But Jason doesn't like to be told no so he just went off, and in a couple days he brought this stuff down to the studio and we were like, "Damn dude! That's awesome!"

MM: So who is the guy on the cover?

MS: It's Jason! He just super-imposed the skull over his face. I still don't know how he got it all done.

MM: Back to something you

just said: there are songs of yours that you don't get to hear until Eric actually records the vocals? Isn't that a scary way to work?

MS: Very! That's why I take so much time with the arrangements. Last time, with Eric and I not having written together, he thought up the verses and I thought up the choruses. Now, for this one, we didn't even talk about it. We just knew. He sang everywhere there was supposed to be singing. He didn't sing where the solos were supposed to go. So we just locked in on this one, and now he kinda knows my style. Or anti-style.

MM: His vocal on "Killing Time" has that Dave Mustaine quasi-rap thing going on, and it has almost the same rhythmic cadence as "Ice Ice Baby" by Vanilla Ice.

MS: I like that!

MM: You're a big Vanilla Ice fan? Maybe that accounts for your haircut.

MS: I like all kinds of music. I'd probably sicken you. I draw the line at Vanilla Ice, though, even though I like that one of our songs sounds like him. It was a really hard song to write. We couldn't think of anything. But it was a fun riff, and it's a fun song to play, so we didn't want to ditch it, but if we had more time we would have replaced it with something else. I wrote two songs after that that we could have

easily replaced it with, but there was no way. We were on a schedule, so you can't be screwing around.

MM: All those old songs are so so, uh, acrobatic.

MS: It's so hard to make a set list. There are so many albums and so many songs, so it's just, "What the hell? What do we pick?" We'll probably do a little more from *Storm*. We might do "The Master Sleeps" and "Iron Tears."

MM: "I Live You Die" is essential. And "Hard On You."

MS: We've been playing those for five years.

MM: I don't care! Anything you want to add?

MS: Check out the website: www.flotsam-and-jetsam.com

MM: Jason recently got himself in hot water talking about Napster.

MS: Yeah, I know! He got me involved in it too! I did an interview with KNAC and they just dogged me because of Jason's comments!

MM: Well, he just got caught saying two things that didn't really jive together.

MS: Well, it's impossible to argue Napster. No one fucking argues it, or they end up looking like a jackass. So I don't know. What's Napster? [laughs]



Flotsam And Jetsam cir. 1988 (from l-r): Eric A.K., Ed Carlson, Mike Gilbert, Kelly David Smith and Troy Gregory.

KRISIUM



Brazilian Metal Warriors

by AnneMarie Bowman

call it the power of a thousand fists. Some bands stand the test of time to play such an extreme form of music, that comes from so deep inside, they are compelled to unleash it lest they self-immolate.

Krisium is a Brazilian metal band that has been around since 1991. They are known for their extreme metal sound and their dedication to the genre.

stayed true to themselves and their beliefs. Never once did their conviction falter. It has not been easy for brothers Moyses and Max Kolesne [guitar and drums] and bassist Alex Camargo. Their battles have been uphill, but their fortitude unwavering. Formed in 1991 in Brazil, the members of Krisium were heavily influenced by Slayer and Morbid Angel. There was something about those two bands that helped lay the foundation of a whole movement in the metal scene. The Almighty Underground. The underground that is still here, still strong, that will never give up and never die. It's a movement Krisium is proudly part of, and steadily climbing towards the top of.

Starting out, Krisium probably had it a bit harder than their counterparts in Europe and America. The first half of their career was totally self-financed, but their determination so strong they wound up paying for European tours out of their own pockets with just t-shirt sales to supplement their income. It was a battle fought

and won, leading as it did to worldwide recognition and a record deal. The next fight was a glorious victory, a North American tour and an appearance at the 1999 Milwaukee MetalFest, which led to a recording contract with Century Media.

The year 2000 saw the release of *Conquerors Of Armageddon*, a devastatingly powerful album that solidified Krisium's status as one of the most powerful underground metal bands in the world. By the time

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KRISIUN

continued

ancient warriors, the warriors who died fighting for honor and freedom, for their own way to live, and who were killed by the new man's empire. The old ancient cultures were killed off, the Indian cultures of North and South America, and even in Europe. It has happened throughout the years, in all of history. The new man's empire—religion and politics—has killed out the warrior spirit. *Ageless Venomous* means that this power of the ancient warriors never dies and it is coming back for revenge. They are bringing revenge and destruction to this world, to this empire of lies. The lyrics of course

are different from each other, they have different subjects, but most are about this subject. About revenge and fighting for honor. About not following

the masses and trying to be just like the others. About not following society's rules of politics and religion.

MM: That was a good answer, a good way to describe it. I feel like an ancient warrior, as if I am fighting every day. I feel it inside of me. Do you?

MK: Yeah. Be yourself, don't follow the masses. Fight for freedom. You know, 95% of the human race are just following the same. They are killing the feelings they have inside. Everyone has primitive instincts they need to get out. It is a more natural way to live. Fight for the things you believe. Krisiun had very bad times in the beginning. I had no money to buy drumsticks. We never gave up, we never wimped out. We kept the faith, kept the

strength. Our lives were not just concerning getting money to live, the most important thing was to keep fighting, and keep playing music. Do it for metal and your own true self.

MM: I know exactly what you are talking about. I feel it is my mission to promote this music. I have a full time job which I like, but it is hard work



and I have a lot of responsibility and that is my everyday fight. I fight to pay my bills so I can live the way I want to live, and fight for metal everyday. I keep the faith and the strength.

MK: That is good to hear. It seems we have the same values towards the metal scene. There are still some real bands that keep the metal roots alive. The scene would not be the same without them. The same goes for the fans, the ones who go to shows and support the real metal scene. It is like we are all of the same horde, but we just have different duties. We are a bunch of warriors together, fighting for metal.

MM: I have been touching on that just recently. I tend to be drawn to, and interview the bands that have that warrior ethic. I have asked this question of the last two bands I have talked

to, so now I pose it of you. Do you think metal music is a call of a brotherhood of people who all have the same feelings and beliefs inside of them?

MK: Yes. It is a lifestyle. When you believe in something so strongly, you live with honor. Most people you see everyday just go about caring about money or caring about superficial things. I mean, it is very important to have a job and have money to live. If you do not work there is no way to live. However, I think that all those people who are fighting for metal are fighting for honor. They are fighting for something which is not artificial. I think that is something that makes real metal people different from others. They have a mission in their lives. If you do that, then you are going against the masses. And you are not a wimp like 95% of the people. I think

W 8

are few, but we are stronger than the masses.

MM: Well said Max! Keep fighting the fight. Long live the power and strength of the mighty metal warriors of Krisiun!



KRISIUN Select Discography

- Evil Age* — 1991, demo
- Curse Of The Evil One* (split) — 1992, demo
- Unmerciful Order* — 1993, Dynamo
- Black Force Domain* — 1995, Century Media/Gun
- Apocalyptic Revelation* — 1998, Century Media/Gun
- Conquerors Of Armageddon* — 2000, Century Media
- Ageless Venomous* — 2001, Century Media

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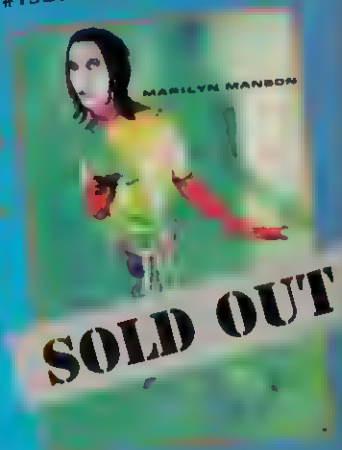
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#9008 - Ozzy Osbourne

A Metal Evolution

by Adrian "The Energizer"
Bromley

"We have always made an attempt to create something new and exciting with each album. We just don't want to repeat ourselves," begins Soilwork guitarist Peter Wichers about the band's Nuclear Blast debut titled *A Predator's Portrait*. "We just don't want to stand still with our creativity and do the same style of songs over and over again. It was really important for us to try a lot of new things with this record. In the very beginning we were constantly searching for our sound. We were compared to a lot of the bands here in Sweden early on, and that was expected, but we think that with *A Predator's Portrait* we have found our sound."

Listening to the bands' latest album, it is quite easy to follow the evolution of the band from

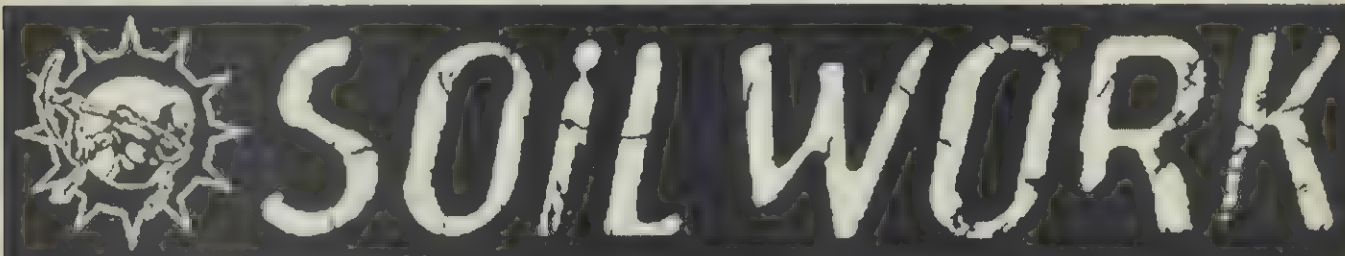
their two previous opuses, 1998's *Steel Bath Suicide* and 1999's deadly *The Chainheart Machine*. While still speed/thrash metal, the band — rounded out by singer Bjorn Strid, guitarist Ola Frennin, bassist Ola Flink, Sven Carlsson and drummer Henry Ranta — has made the effort to bring melody to the aggressiveness.

"The biggest change about Soilwork's sound on this record is that it is very melodic, but still very fast and intense," explains singer Bjorn Strid. "I think there is a lot more atmosphere within our music right now, and we are also working in the clean vocals. I am very proud that we made an attempt to use clean vocals more on this record. And why not? Why not ask the other guys in the band to try and find new scales and ideas to do with their guitar sounds? It is hard to stay happy and within your area of musicianship without wanting to explore other options. You just feel the need to expand and try new things and we did just that. I decided to

use a sound coach to help me get a lot out of my clean vocals and I think the end result is pretty good.

"I think all of our records have been pretty good, though I don't really like what we did with the first album. Some songs are okay, but it was four years ago and we have changed so much," says Wichers. "I really liked the end result of *The Chainheart Machine*. It was easy to like what we did there and to make the transition to the new record by adding newer elements. When I look back at those records I think it really shows that we have gotten to a point in our musical careers where we can say we are proud and excited with what we are doing. We haven't taken huge steps since we first started out, just enough steps to move forward and distance us from our past work."

Of the new record, Strid says, "This record is a very personal one. I think this record has a
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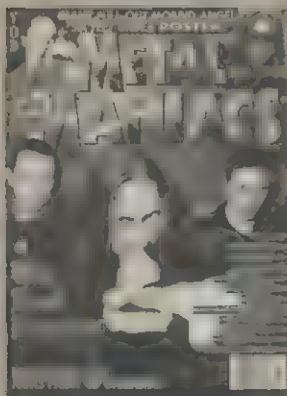


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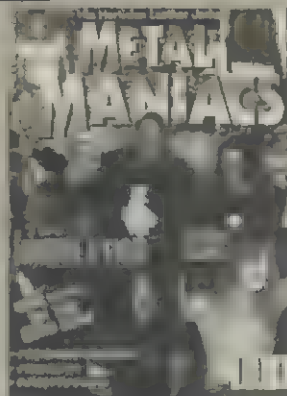
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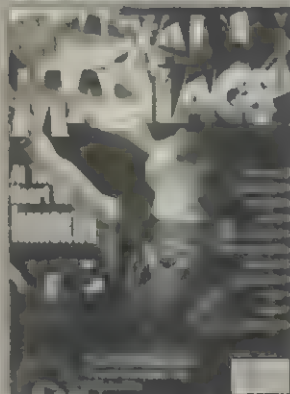
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SOILWORK

continued

more personal sound, though there are similarities between this record and the last one. This record is a lot more atmospheric, dynamic sounding and varied opposed to the last record, due to the use of clean and harsh vocals. I think that is really only the most notable change. We're growing and it shows."

When the band had released *The Chainheart Machine* on Listenable records a few years back, there was a rather strong buzz in the metal scene about the music of Soilwork. People were taking note of their aggressive style and tight musicianship. Did the buzz about the band's intensity and style put any pressure on the band to top what they had done with *The Chainheart Machine*? Was there pressure from the new label?

we are proud of what we have with this album. The label has done a great job and it seems like we are a high priority, so there is also some pressure. I think we are just glad to be in this position with a great label backing us and a solid disc to play and tour with."

Having worked with Frederik Nordstrom at Studio Fredman for *A Predator's Portrait*, Wichers is proud that such an important record in their career has seen great results. What is the studio work like for the band? Do they try several ideas or does the record just take shape in the studio?

"The studio is a really strange place to be," states Wichers. "We try a lot of things in the studio that never make it onto our record, but that is the way you grow as a band and with your music. Also, when you take time to work on material at home and get all excited about the work, once it makes its way into the studio it changes and it doesn't seem to have the same appeal as it did at your home. When that hap-

I know what we need to do and that means scoping out new terrain to follow and not copy other people's work. It is hard to be unique, but it is possible."

Has studio work become easier since the early days of recording? "Oh yeah, very different. We have managed to spend more and more time each disc in the studio. The first album we were in there for two weeks, the second disc three weeks and this one for a month or so. The more time you have in the studio, the more confident you become with what you are doing musically. You become more aware of what you can do in that time frame. With *A Predator's Portrait* we all feel that we were able to get almost all of the stuff we wanted to do on the record."

And seeing that a lot of bands out there get in a rut of sounding the same with each record as the years go on, what does Soilwork credit their diverse offerings too

"I think we just make a conscious effort to



"There is always some kind of nervous feeling that comes over a band when you get into the studio to start on a record, but you have to deal with it. You can't think what the fans or the label says. You have to believe in what you do," says the guitarist. "What we decided to do with this record was to just do what we wanted to do and progress with the band and try new things and not care what people think. We are glad people really believe in what we do, but the most important thing is that we like what we have created."

Adds Strid, "Seeing that this is our first disc for Nuclear Blast, of course we are nervous, but

pens, you need to really look at the idea and try to figure out another way to go about it. Some of our best ideas have come from trying to figure out how to try new things and get them to stay on the record and further our sound."

"By bringing in new ideas and styles to the music, something we definitely did on the new album, it is allowing our music fans to grow with us as well. If they don't like the growth, we can't do much about it, can we?"

He continues, "We don't want to be like anyone else when it comes to making metal music, but we still don't want to change too much and lose our trademark sound. When I make music

not repeat ourselves. Why would we want to make the same record? We use ideas from the past with certain songs, ideas that work, but we don't copy them whole. We know what works and what doesn't and with each record you have to be sure that the record works in its entirety. We just do what comes natural."

Looking at the album cover and reading the song titles (even taking note of the album title), it is quite obvious this is a dark record. Why so dark and gloomy? Is the world really that bad? What inspires these ideas for the Soilwork material?

more

SOILWORK

continued

"I'm not a very destructive person," states singer Strid. "But these are just tales that I sing about and come up with. Songs and ideas inspired by violent and neurotic people with sick minds. I read up a lot on the subject of psychology and the human behavior — maybe that is where it all comes from?"

And Wichers take in all of this?

"I think Bjorn tried to create a concept with this album and I think it worked quite well," he answers. "A lot of it does come from what he reads or studies, but some of it comes from our own experiences. Everything in our music is usually comes from something we have experienced. So you won't find us singing about how Satan is going to rise from a volcano in 2015. Not with Soilwork. Our music and ideas comes from what we know."

With the band in demand right now — loads of press, touring and new material in the works — the topic of the music business comes up and how Soilwork deals with it all.

Responds Wichers, "When we signed our first record deal we were 18, pretty green on the music industry. We were only into it for releasing an album and playing. Then you start to find out all of the business side that comes to it all and you start to lose inspiration from it all. What you need to do is get a manager so you can focus on the music and find out why you are doing this and why it is so important to you. Having those music industry problems can be a big headache. A record label only really wants a product to sell. That is what it basically comes down to. They don't really care what you have to do to get to that certain point of making a record. I don't like all of this business in music, but it is something you have to deal with. If you can push all of that aside and concentrate on making music, then you can get somewhere as a band."

"I love being in that band and having strong friendships with everyone in the band. It really means a lot to me," says Wichers. "I like to be able to meet all of these people and make connections and just touring. This is a blast to be part of. I love meeting the fans the most. I can't explain it, but it makes me feel so good that people love what Soilwork does. It feels great knowing people will go out and buy your record."

Does it make you all teary-eyed?

"(Laughs) Sometimes. When we get such feedback and such fantastic reviews, I really get overwhelmed. It is exciting. When people come up to us and say, 'I love what you are doing,' We don't say, 'Yeah, we know.' We are very humble and always make sure to thank people for supporting us. We have no intention of getting

pigheaded about it all. All of this just affects us in such a good way that we can only be grateful that we are getting the opportunity to do this."

The interview comes to a close with word of



the band entering the studio soon to start work on album number four. Wichers gives us the word on the new disc.

"We are looking forward to starting work this October on the new record. Actually someone from your country of Canada will be helping us produce the next disc."

Really? Who?

"Devin Townsend," juts in Wichers. "We are so excited to be working with him."

He did an amazing job a few years back with Stuck Mojo on the *Pigwalk* record (1996). He will definitely help the band.

"Yes. *Pigwalk* is such a great record. That was one of the main reasons why we wanted to record with him. We think our sound and his ideas will go well together. I think he will definitely be able to take our sound to a higher level. We need someone to help organize all of our shit that we have going on."

Now you got me all teary-eyed, dammit!

"(Laughs) Well, good. He is such a great person to be working with. I am a huge fan of his work. It will be such a pleasure to hook up and make things happens for Soilwork. Should be a good year for us next year."



SOILWORK Select Discography

In Dreams We Fall Into The Eternal Lake — 1997, demo

Steel Bath Suicide — 1998, Listenable

The Chainheart Machine — 2000, Century Media

Steelbath Suicide Reissue — 2000,

Listenable/2001, Century Media

A Predator's Portrait — 2001, Nuclear Blast

JAG PANZER

continued from page 81

4,000 Manowar fans have never heard of us.

MM: That's really bizarre. I think Hammerfall is total shit and yet they have a big following, Primal Fear too. But despite the very high quality of your material there seems to be less of an awareness for Jag Panzer. The success of these crappy bands has got to be frustrating.

RS: The really frustrating thing about our situation is the fact that we've worked a long time, we've worked hard, we've put out quality stuff and we've put our hearts into what we do. But it seems like there are certain entities that come along and are just anointed "The Next Big Band." And the publicity machine works in their favor—that's what's frustrating. When you listen to a new band and they really kick ass, that's exciting, that's great. But then you listen to some of these bands—and I'm not going to say any names because I don't think it's right necessarily...

MM: That's the critic's job—to be an asshole.

RS: It's so frustrating that these bands just get all this push and it's schlock, it's absolute shit, it's rehashed garbage. It doesn't have a heart and that's frustrating.

MM: It's third generation Helloween and I wasn't ever so high on Helloween.

MB: When you look at the European scene, which is definitely the big metal scene on Earth right now, they've got a great selection of metal magazines. Every month they do

metal charts; they get all the critics and rank their favorite albums. The past two albums we've come in #1 in every major magazine and the bands below us sell 10 times as much. I think American bands are at a severe disadvantage over there. The reason is because if you're in a band like Stratovarius you're gonna come out with an album and it's going to go #1 in Finland. Instantly you are gonna get a ton of support from your home country; you can play gigs, you can pack it, you can get financing, you can get a road crew. Nothing against these European bands—I like a lot of them—but they all top the charts in their country and they reap the benefits of it. American bands don't get anything in America. We get the few magazines that are dedicated to metal. Look at Iced Earth, they're where they are at because Schaffer works his ass off, not because the label is buying him \$10,000 backdrops or financing a big tour for him.

MM: Iced Earth makes albums relying on the triplet and the triplet alone. Does that guy do anything other than that?

CB: He does it well though.

MM: Precise as hell, and with a lot of energy live. I just see it as kid's stuff when compared

to your music.

RS: Well thank you very much, that's extraordinarily flattering.

MB: It's unfortunate that sometimes the underground scene nowadays seems almost like a miniature version of the major label scene, where money talks completely over music quality. The metal scene was not like that in the early '80s. I was listening to bands like Angel Witch and Witchfynde and I didn't give a fuck how many ads Angel Witch had in a magazine, I don't even think I saw one. I just had the album and thought it kicked ass.

MM: I'd like to give you an opportunity to describe your band and your band's sound to someone who hasn't heard it.

MB: I'll just lay it on the line here; we don't mask any deficiencies. I hear a lot of bands masking deficiencies; they don't have a good singer and they duck him in the mix or double him or whatever. We put everything out there. In the metal I grew up with, you had to have a kickass singer, you had to have ripping leads, and you had to have a memorable song. That was metal. That's what we do today and we don't recycle riffs either, we try to come up with something new every time.



JAG PANZER Select Discography

Ample Destruction — 1990 (reissue), Metalcore Records (reissued again in '91 via Metal Blade)

Shadow Thief — 1992, bootleg

Dissident Alliance — 1994, Rising Sun/Pavement (limited edition release in Europe only)

The Fourth Judgement — 1995, Century Media

Age Of Mastery — 1998, Century Media

Do You See What I See — 1999, Century Media (internet release from CM website during Christmas featuring Jag Panzer version of the holiday classic)

Thane To The Throne — 2000, Century Media

Mechanized Warfare — 2001, Century Media

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DARK FUNERAL

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about it more. He got more involved in the music, and I got more involved with the lyrics. I trust him totally with the lyrics, so he can tell you more about those."

Now it is Caligula's turn to speak. What have you done differently on this recording? The vocals are very strong. Tell a bit about the lyrics also. Did you alter your approach? "Most of the lyrics are in the same vein as the old stuff," Caligula answers. "What you are hearing is not a finished product. I still have much to add. It will be very Dark Funeral. You will hear low-pitched and high-pitched vocals, even some normal vocals. Not like the Norwegians, not that opera shit, I would sound really stupid trying to do that. However, some normal vocals will be included. As for lyrics, the song "Goddess Of Sodomy" is something different for me. It is not like anything I have written before. It is about pain and torture, about experiences I have had in the last few months. I have had a new thing in my life. I have found that pain can bring pleasure. Being tortured has brought me to places I have never been before. The song is about torture and sexual desire. It is about giving and receiving pain, and getting sexual pleasure from it. I find it quite amazing and fascinating what people can go through to reach climax. I have been experimenting with it just recently. I have just started; I still have a long way to go. It will be interesting to hear what people will think about it as it is a new thing for Dark Funeral, a subject we had not touched on before. We are limited to certain topics, so basically the lyrics stay within those topics. People expect us to have satanic lyrics. I like to write stories, fictitious stories about

glorifying the arrival of Satan's empire once again. I usually have a main theme in my head when I start the lyrics for an album. It usually always starts with Satan. A loosely based theme. Someday I want to write a theme album; one that is all connected. A concept album. Maybe next time. Ahriman interjects, "We actually talked about it, doing a concept album. I have an idea for a theme, but I am not a lyric writer. It is a good theme I think, with a good writer who can get into that theme, it could come out pretty

good." Caligula adds, "It would be hard for me to do it. I am not used to writing like that. I would have to write the beginning, the middle and the end in that order and I am not used to that. It would require the right atmosphere. Like here in the studio you can see I have my ritual cloth set up. That usually hangs in my ritual chamber at home. I put it up so I can become one with the music, and create that certain mood and atmosphere. That is a problem, in the studio you can get distracted so easy, and break the atmosphere. If I look through the window and see Peter take a telephone call, sometimes I have to start all over. Usually I send everyone away when I do my vocals. It is only me here because I do not want to be disturbed. You have to express yourself in a different way than playing an instrument. You have to use your whole body when doing vocals."

What does Ahriman do to find the right atmosphere for recording? Laughing, he holds up a can of Carlsberg. Okay, besides beer! "No really," he says, "When I record I am always sober. For this album, I worked in a bit of a different way than before. When I started to write it, I recorded a lot of it on my new portable studio, which I did not have before. I would put my headphones on in the middle of the night, and play in the darkness. I would relax, and try to focus on just playing, and seeing what would come out, not on trying to put pressure on myself to actually write. The night gives me lots of inspiration. I have lots of feeling inside. It sometimes takes a couple of hours before I am finally able to release those inner demons, and explain them with music. I always come up with ideas, sometimes I like them, but sometimes

I hate them. That is the beauty of the portable studio though, because I capture everything. Even the stuff that I think sucks, because someone else in the band might be able to give me a new perspective on it." Caligula tries to explain, "When you come up with a riff, you always have it in your subconscious mind. You keep coming back to it, although you know it does not sound correct, and you want to change it. There might only be need to change one single tone. By recording it and bringing it to us, we can help get past the first riff that is always there in the subconscious, the one you keep going back to even when you don't want to. It happens to me with my vocals also. When I first try to put vocals over the music, sometimes I will try a certain delivery that does not work. I know it is not working, but I can't get that first idea out of my head, and I keep going back to it. Then someone will tell me "No, do it this way instead." You have to have a fresh ear around to get it right and create good music."

What do you think was the biggest challenge with this recording? Caligula starts first, "I think the biggest challenge was to impress ourselves with it. We wanted to progress musically but maintain the Dark Funeral atmosphere." Ahriman adds, "I wanted the drums to have a bigger roll in the music, and I wanted them to feel more alive. I wanted them to follow the guitar melodies more. They never felt that way before." Turning goofy, and obviously feeling the alcohol, Ahriman goes on, "A big part of Dark Funeral is that it should feel like a smash in the face. You can never get too comfortable with a nice part, because just when you think you can calm down, we come back with a fist in your face! That is Dark Funeral. Up and down, and very intense. A roller coaster ride with Satan." Everyone in the room is laughing now, I guess it is time to wrap it up and have some fun. Caligula adds one last thing; "I can't wait to read the roller coaster story."

Ahriman and Caligula oblige me with a recording demonstration, recording some vocals and guitar tracks. More drinking ensues, and then I am treated to a demonstration of forest disease, a howling-at-the-moon thing they continue to do the rest of the night. Tommy Tägtgren, Peter's brother, arrives and I finally get the full studio tour. It is a very impressive complex, with three fully functional recording studios (one of which is Tommy's), a dorm room, showers and a full kitchen. Peter had recently installed Pro-Tools equipment, and is still renovating and improving all the time. *Diabolis Interium's* production is an example of that improvement.

We party all night. Seven a.m., the sun creeping up, I take one last look upon Peter's Empire from the kitchen window of the band house. The studio is on the banks of a lake. I sigh at the beauty of it. And Sweden delivers again.

PISSING RAZORS

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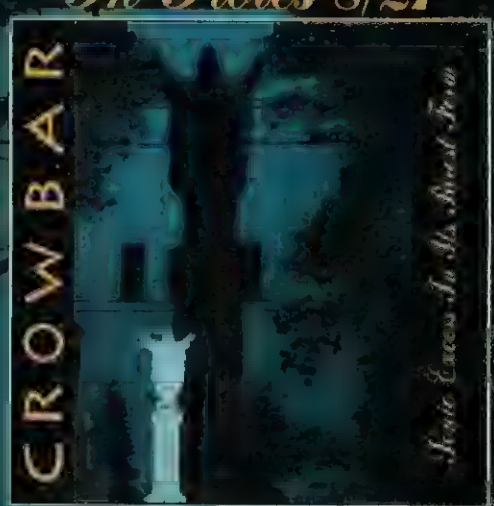


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PIG DESTROYER

continued from page 53

beautiful way. He wrote poems where he'd be talking about a dead body, and he would make it out to be the most beautiful thing in the world. That really touched me; I wanted to use some of what would be considered "death metal themes" — death and murder and stuff like that — but I didn't want to convey them in an autopsy photograph type of way. I didn't want anything completely nihilistic and desensitized because I don't think that does it justice. If you see a visual of a body that got hit by a car and it's really brutal looking and you're like, "Oh my god," it's a real visual experience. There's no emotion there.

MM: So in "Tickets To The Car Crash," you're trying to re-attach emotion to things that would otherwise be gore and nothing more?

JRH: Exactly. Take the victims and re-attach the emotion. Like maybe you see the same picture of that guy who got hit by the car but now you know a little bit about the story, you know the person personally, conversations he had that day, what was going through his head. I try to bring people back into it. One of the things I don't like about death metal is that, if you're gonna say about that type of subject matter, then you have to get your hands a little dirty. I think people are too used to being able to look at it and then just look away. I want people to look at it and remember it for years to come.

MM: Do you think there's less of an emphasis on lyrics today? Visually, it's hard to shock people. The majority of people have become desensitized.

JRH: Absolutely and I never want to get that way. My lyrics are my only contribution to this band. I can't offer anything musically so I just want to try to write the best things I can possibly write and have the lyrics be at least as engaging as the music.

MM: We've been running circles around the outer shell of these lyrics. You have no intention of making the true meanings known right now, do you?

JRH: I like to keep everything a secret because I know that if people really knew what some of these lyrics were about, they probably wouldn't listen to the record. I have a tendency to intentionally conceal things. Nobody wants to feel exposed when thousands of people hear what you're doing. When you start playing with real people, it gets touchy. The actual circumstances are insignificant to the final product. You take a little truth and mix it with a little fiction. I just looked at [the lyrics] to *38 Counts* the other day. The old record is about feeling manipulated and twisted by others. On this record, nobody's controlling me. I was allowing myself to be controlled.

MM: So it's like your own emotional sequel?

JRH: That just came to me. I can actually trace the logic of it and the emotional development because it's been a few years since [a lot of these songs] on that last record. There's a lot of anger when you're dealing with people who don't even know the power they hold over you or don't respect it. It's kind of funny to think about it. I was reading *The Rules Of Attraction* [by Bret Easton Ellis]. The whole story is based around three different characters at a college. He writes in first person so each character has their own voice. There's a character who's just a little bit fucked up with people. It's the person doing it and not being it. It's interesting how people and people can be different and people can be the same. I think people want to know what you're thinking. I think it's a secret that people want to know.

MM: What is the significance of the song "Murder-Blues" on this record?

JRH: When I'm sitting around doing nothing out on drugs and there's just this thing going around in my head, it's never about one relationship. I look at time and all the confusion about sexuality and different people. There are a lot of different people engaged in this album from song to song. Rather than pick one of them, I just sort of chose the name Jennifer [as a composite]. I used that character to try to tie everyone together. It's just one singular entity again to give the record more of a final feel instead of being all over the place. The red hair is definitely rooted in real life though.

MM: "Strangled With A Halo" questions religion.

JRH: My fascination with religion and life in general is that there's this purity and innocence that is constantly trying to be reclaimed. You lose it day to day. You keep feeling empty. Sometimes you just want to believe what you believed when you were a kid, when things were a lot simpler. You spend your entire life trying to find something that can bring you back that blissful ignorance. Whether it's with a person or with religion, people are always looking for something to fill that hole. The [void] is always gonna be there. It's always getting bigger. That song is basically about going on a little quest to

try to find something that you know is probably not there.

MM: What about your own take on religion?

JRH: I think atheist is too harsh a word. I would have to go with agnostic. I'm not a behavioral psychologist. I have friends who [think] everything is [based on] electrical impulses to your brain. All feel-



ing is totally scientific. I don't have any answers at all. I think that was some of my faults on the early lyrics on the demo and the 7". I was always trying to write these awful political songs. I was new to the whole thing. I didn't know what I was doing.

MM: But the songs sort of called for it. They were far more punk rooted.

JRH: Exactly. I was a big Dead Kennedy's fan from way back so I was like, "Well, hey, I'm gonna talk about this crap too and I'm gonna talk about how fucked up the government is." I look back at it now and it was so goddamn pretentious and hypocritical. I woke up one day and I was like, "You know, I don't have my own life in order. I don't have any of these answers but I have a lot of questions." So now all my lyrics are about questions.

MM: How much do drugs play a role in what you write?

JRH: I haven't done too many psychedelic drugs. My drugs of choice are usually Ecstasy and K, your typical shitty raver drugs. Basically, I have a lot of emotional problems and I like any outlet that I can get to calm myself down. When you get into psychedelics, it gives you images but pulls you away from emotion. Ecstasy relaxes me, allowing me to get inside my head. I feel like I can dig that much deeper because I'm comfortable.

continued on page 118



ZEKE



Freedom Rock

by Professor Black

The first time I heard Zeke was on a tape my friend in Pennsylvania made. It had two full-length albums on one side. It had no song or album titles, nothing other than 40 minutes of quick-blast punk/rock hysteria. Very short songs, in the Misfits sense rather than the A.C. sense. I liked the speed of it, the unmercifully-shrewd arrangements and the evidence of rehearsal in the execution. This was promising, even if they were a Seattle band.

So I bought 1999's *Dirty Sanchez*, my first-ever Epitaph Records purchase, and it was the same deal. Rapid kicks in the ribs. Freedom rock. It was at this point that I decided, until further notice, to actively purchase Zeke records whenever they come out. Then I did a tape trade with a guy in Kentucky earlier this year. Although they're packed somewhat inconve-

niently in the middle of a side, the five then-fresh Zeke tracks he included blew me away. Zeke has grown a third eye. Zeke has gone metal! They're using our own riffs against us, the fuckers!

Have to say, it's flattering to see bands outside the genre looking to it for inspiration and finding just that. *Death Alley* owes a lot to metal and is the best Zeke record for it. If you don't include *Candlemass's From The 13th Sun*, it's probably the best piece of non-genred underground rock since *Turbonegro's* last album. On *Death Alley*, released by *Aces & Eights*, *Venom* and *DiAnno Maiden* crash through Zeke's established brew of *Motörhead*, *Misfits* and *Southern Rock*. You don't have to scrutinize to hear the steals from *Venom*, *Earth A.D.* and even *Entombed's "Damn Deal Done."* The vocals are under control and the speed is not. And the solos, the solos! *Death Alley* makes a lot of its competitors look like pathetic fumblerers. No names necessary. Don't bother to look for it at

Best Buy, but any independent record store with an ear should have several copies of it on hand. It's not pure metal, hell no, but it bangs my head a lot harder than, for example, *Horror Show*, *True Carnage* and *The Tokyo Showdown* combined. And maybe you feel differently, but give me an ounce of punk over a drop of hip-hop any day. This fucker revitalizes everything it touches. Drummer *Donny Paycheck* explains.

Donny Paycheck: I think the deal is that we've all been metal fans for years. We totally got back into listening to the first two Maiden records and *Unleashed in the East*. We even got into *Bathory*. Then we went to see *Mayhem*, even got a picture with one of the guys. So we're really stoked on this whole metal thing and it came across in what we were writing. We didn't try to change or anything, but we added more metal influence to what we were doing. We really starting thinking that it was some-

thing that no one was doing. It was... body else's stuff and it was something the music industry needed at this point. We did it to have fun, and it turned out to be something pretty damn cool.

Metal Maniacs: What did you like about Mayhem?

DP: They have a lot of impact and they're so energetic. I love their hard edge. They're taking rock. Entombed too. It's just so powerful and the songwriting's really good. I had become really bored with most metal then we got back into the old stuff before finding some new bands that were actually writing songs. [Laughs] Memorable stuff. That gave us the spark to write this record.

MM: I heard you were breaking up.

DP: We always talk shit like "We're about to break up, people think that we're about to break up, people think that we're about to break up, people think that we're about to break up." It's been going on for years. I think that we have nothing left to offer the underground scene and people are done with us and we're done with them, then I think we would break up. But as we have something to contribute, we're going to keep going. But we say that every time from the stage all the time. That was the last tour, we were saying we were going to break up after this record. Most of the stuff we do is pretty tongue-in-cheek.

MM: Whose choice was it not to release the record on Epitaph?

DP: The label's. But we're glad because everything's going much more smoothly. We got to hire a publicist for a year. When you're on a big label, they only give you so much time with the publicity machine.

MM: Then somebody else takes your place, priority-wise.

DP: Yeah, right. Especially when they spend only \$20,000 on your record and \$100,000 on Rancid, so they have to work Rancid to get their money back. It's like a battle or something. They're not trying to sell music, they're trying to make money. This way, there are other records coming out on the indie Aces & Eights label until I don't know when. We decided to build our own machine and we got to keep going for quite a while. It'll get the push it deserves.

MM: I bet your crowds are pretty mixed.

DP: Yeah, from basic mohawk-wearers to metalheads, and what I like is that most of the people know that it's supposed to be humorous. Everybody's got a bit of an idea that we're there to have a good time and not to kill each other. Skinheads haven't been showing up so that's a good thing.

MM: Where's your best audience?

DP: Austin, Texas. We played [musicbiz festival] South By Southwest on the Tuesday before

it even started and 700 people paid. We played there again that Friday and the show sold out. Austin has such a cool music scene. It reminds me of Seattle in the early '90s. We also do great here in Seattle, 400-a-show, but it's a different vibe here now, with all the Implants as I call 'em, people who moved here to get famous and got stuck here. I like Chicago and New York. Philadelphia's tough, though.

MM: Zeke has a rep for personnel changes.

DP: Yeah, well, Mark [guitar/vocals] and I are original. Sonny came along when we had a bass player quit and we got Kurt for playing bass so Sonny became second guitarist. We have been through some bass players [laughs].

MM: What is it about bass players?

DP: The first one quit because he'd rather do drugs than practice and he didn't think anything was going to happen. Didn't care. We were still doing it for fun. Then Kurt [Kilfelt], he used to be in a band called Holy Terror.



MM: He was in Agent Steel for a while too.

DP: Yeah, he had gotten really jaded with the whole rock thing, so he was throwing the bass into the crowd, jumping into the crowd, and it was funny, but like every night? He did a lot of tours with us, and every night the three of us were left up there playing songs. It was basically a joke to Kurt. Mark [Pierce] had played with us before we made our first record, and he wanted to come back and he was serious. We wanted him and Kurt wasn't feeling like sticking around, so we ended up kicking Kurt out and getting Mark, but we picked on Mark for so long that he couldn't take it anymore. You know how there's always one guy in the band that the joke's always on? [Laughs].

MM: The Jason Newsted thing.

DP: He just couldn't take it anymore and he quit. So we got who we like to call The Kid or Mad Matz. He's just a super-nice young guy. Knows every metal song there is. Knew every Zeke song coming in, probably better than we did. We had to let him join. Things have been a lot better. Mark was a downer. He didn't like being with us, mostly because of the way we were to him. But Jeff [Matz, the new bassist] is a breath of fresh air. Now we can do anything. He can do that metal stuff. He can play anything. You start playing any Black Sabbath song and the guy knows it. Every black metal band too. He knows it. Some black metal band comes to town and it's like, "Donny, we gotta go see this band!" It's great to have a guy totally into music in your band.

MM: So you have a tour laid out?

DP: Yeah, after cruising the U.S., we hit Europe in November and head home for the holidays.

In January, we'll be back out on the road in the U.S. We would've started sooner if the record had been out. We're all sitting here going, "What the fuck are we doing home?" We've been home seven months this year, which is unheard-of. For the last five years, we've been out 10 months a year. I guess it's a good thing because the shows will be really packed, plus the record will be in

the stores and people will be stoked to hear and see what's going on.

MM: It's headbanging music. All roads lead to Motörhead.

DP: I can dig it. And if they don't, they're missing something.

ZEKE Select Discography

Super Sound Racing — 1996, Scooch Pooch
Flat Tracker — 1996, Scooch Pooch
Kicked In The Teeth — 1998, Epitaph
Pinstriping The Dutchman's Coffin - A Tribute... — 1999, Wrecking Ball
Dirty Sanchez — 1999, Epitaph
Death Alley — 2001, Aces & Eights

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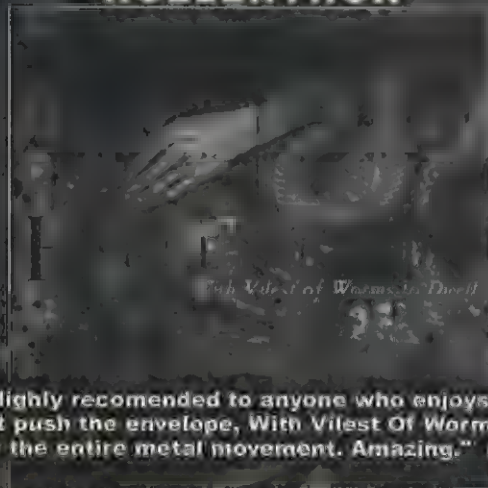
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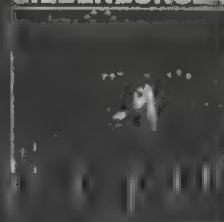
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PIG DESTROYER

continued from page 113

MM: It takes away inhibitions.

JRH: I get to think, looking at things from a different perspective than when sober.

MM: Would you say this record leans toward the notion of regret?

JRH: This record isn't so much about what *has* happened but more about what *hasn't*. I think if I had 90% more of the experiences I wish I had, I probably wouldn't even bother writing lyrics. I would just be out having more experiences. It's not necessarily a regret because you can't regret something you couldn't do. It's more thinking about things that *didn't* go the way you thought they would go. I bring out the sorrow. It helps me get the negative stuff out of my system. If I can make something kinda beautiful, at least in my eyes, then it was worth it.

MM: When you come in with what you've written, do the rest of the guys sort of look at each other and scratch their heads?

JRH: They let me do my own thing. Before this record, Scott thought some of my stuff was too flowery and didn't fit with the music. I'd be cheating myself if I wrote something fake! Whether I'm pissed or not, I want to *care*. Scott was concerned. He likes things to fit together. He has a certain idea in mind of how things should be so when I come in with non-brutal shit, he's like, "I don't know about this." Hey, I feel it juxtaposes against the brutality of the music, thus enhancing the listening experience! Look at The Melvins' *Bullhead*. That album is so heavy but the cover is just like a potted plant. If that cover was a skull and crossbones or Satan holding a pitchfork, it would take away from the mystery. It's the total randomness of the cover art that makes you go, "Wow, where is this band coming from?" I wanted to have that happen with this record. I wanted people to listen to it and not just get the typical death metal experience and say, "Yeah, there's a flaming altar on the cover and all the songs are, 'Hail Satan,' and I'm gonna stick pitchfork in your eye." I could never write like that because that's the kind of shit that I would come up with if I started writing true death metal lyrics. I would write dumb shit.

MM: Did you consider not printing these lyrics?

JRH: I put all the time into them so I want them out there. "Starbelly" was hard for me to print, but, at the same time, that was the one I felt most strongly for.

MM: That's an obvious breakup.

JRH: Yeah.

MM: Everything else on the record seems rather camouflaged but that one is sort of wide open.

JRH: I had thought about changing a bunch of stuff

but I thought I would just be messing with it. After I wrote that song, I thought about the movie *Naked Lunch*. There's a part, I can't remember the actors, but they're in a restaurant and they're arguing about words on paper. If you go back and edit, you take away the honesty. One guy is arguing that you need to go back and change things [to sound] better. The other guy is like, well, what you already throw down is what you want and if you change it you're altering your emotions. I just thought if I fucked with that song it wouldn't work.

MM: You end "Scatology Homework" with, "I learned that boys in dresses are okay on the last day of school." A reference to gun toting teens or a JR Haynes juxtaposition?

JRH: After I wrote that I was thinking that people were going to like it. I thought about violence. I didn't have the best high school years. I was getting picked on. I'm not gonna whine about it but that time was definitely important. That's always kind of hard to get. When you graduate you had this party where all the seniors get locked into the school for a night and there were all the activities and stuff like that. They had this one drag contest where all these guys came out as women and they had a beauty contest. The funny thing was that it was all the people who picked on me who always called me a faggot. My friends and I had spent the last four years getting our asses kicked by all these people for being weird but here they were prancing around in dresses and it was okay. The Dead Kennedys have a song called "Halloween" about how stuck-up suit & tie guys go out on Halloween and dress like women or whatever. Just totally over the top but the other 364 days of the year they beat the shit out of people for doing the same thing. It's the point of a double standard. It's all so stupid for me, the hypocrisy of people. That's the struggle most people have—the struggle of fitting in. That was more of a bitter song. A lot of the songs on this record are more sorrowful than anything else. It's not hateful.

MM: Are you writing anything else lately?

JRH: I'm working on a book right now. Again, it's about obsession over other people. I want to make sure I portray all the characters as being addicted to each other as a metaphor for drug addiction. You can be even more strongly addicted to a person than you can a substance. These characters are hopelessly attached to each other, trying to make it through the

day. I want to write what I feel. That's the main problem people have writing lyrics. They write what they think people want to hear or they write what they think they should be saying. I want to write something I would want to read. If anyone likes it, great, but you can't account for the tastes of thousands. That goes for the music too. Plenty of people would be happy if all we did was play blast beats all the time. Grindcore and death metal right now are turning into an Olympic sport just to see who can blast beat the fastest. I want songs, an album people can sit through. Not to sound boastful but the thing I think is so exciting about *Prowler* is that if you just throw on the first two or three songs, you really don't get a chance to see everything that we bring to the table. I think the record changes, going through a metamorphosis. People need to stick around for the entire thing. I don't like when in three songs you know automatically the whole album. I have a really short attention span.

PIG DESTROYER Select Discography

Demo — 1997, self released

Spilt 7" w/ Orchid — 1997, Amendment

Explosions In Ward 6 — 1998, Clean Plate Records

Split 7" w/ Gnob — 2000, Robodog

Picture Disc 7" — 2000, Reptilian

38 Counts Of Battery — 2000, Relapse

Prowler In The Yard — 2001, Relapse

AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED Discography

Honky Reduction — 1998, Relapse

The Poacher Diaries — 1999, Relapse

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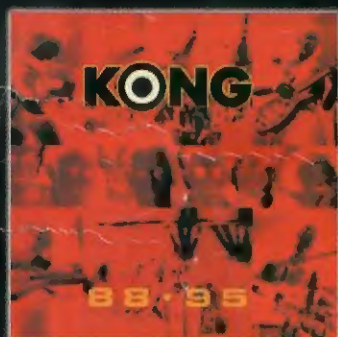
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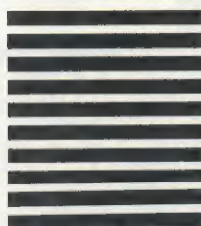
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